WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND

WILLIAM ROMAINE, A. M.

RECTOR OF

SAINT ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE,

AND

SAINT ANN, BLACKFRIARS,

AND

LECTURER OF SAINT DUNSTAN, IN THE WEST,
London.

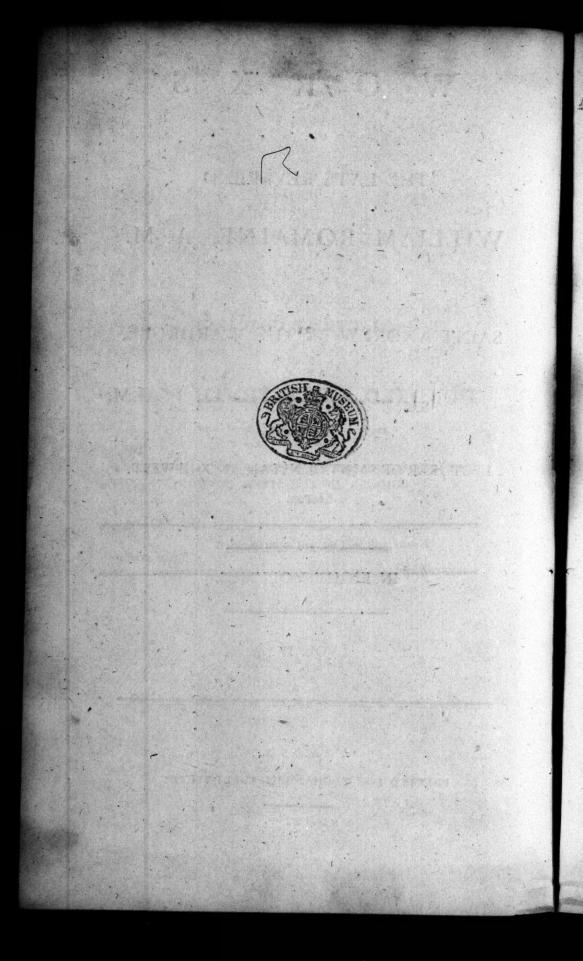
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A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

ONTHE

HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM,

PREACHED

AT THE THURSDAY'S LECTURE, AT ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, IN THE WEST, LONDON:

It becometh well the Just to be thankful.

Pfalm xxxiii.



Entered at Stationers hall.

AT THE PRESENCE AND A ST. DEBERMEN

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It becomes need the full to be drawled.

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PREFACE.

nature; nor destroy receive any aids from the mestal religions; but they are the plaint beneal months of the ippare, of the christian church, and, of the church of the famil.

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THE following comment was not drawn up with any view to its publication. It was only intended for the pulpit, at the Thursday's lecture at St. Dunstan's, and after it had been preached would have been thrown aside; for the author is obliged to make a fermon every week, besides the lecture, and he had no thoughts of fending fuch hafty compofitions to the press. He knows that they want every qualification necessary to make them admired in this polite age: their manner is unfashionably plain and simple, they have nothing studied or brilliant in their style, nor delicately nice in the method; no pretty turns of wit, or striking antitheses to entertain the reader. And the matter is as opposite to the established taste as the manner of them. They are VOL. IV. not

not in the least indebted to the boasted light of nature, they borrow no ornaments from the celebrated religion of nature, nor do they receive any aids from the moral scheme; but they are the plain honest truths of scripture, of the christian church, and of the church of England. And yet these great authorities are not sufficient to protect them from contempt, nor to excuse the author from the charge of novelty. He is very fensible of it. He has been long enough acquainted with the received opinions of the age, and he cannot expect any kind of applause, and he thanks God he does not defire it, from the present set of great and learned men. If you are doing right, you will certainly be cenfured; and if you refolve to do right, you must learn to neglect censure; I have been prevailed on to neglect it by the earnest and daily repeated importunity of the hearers of these lectures, by whom I was determined to make them public. They are here laid before the world, as they were preached, without any alteration; and if it please God to make them the instruments of doing some service to the

the fouls of mankind, my loss of reputation as an author will be fully repaid. If but one single person should find reason to bless God for these lectures, I shall not lose my end. Although I hope they will be useful to many; and I pray the almighty God and Saviour of the world to send them out in his grace and strength, and to accompany them abundantly with his divine power, and then his glory will be the more displayed, if any mighty effects should be produced by such weak instruments.

Every minister of the gospel, who has any zeal for his master's honour, or love for the souls of men, ought to exert himself in these days of reproach and blasphemy: for we are sunk into the very dregs of the latter times, in which it was foretold that iniquity should abound. And does it not now abound? has not his majesty (king George the IId.) complained more than once from the throne of its abounding? has not the convocation at last (in the year 1755) seen it, and publicly confessed the abounding of iniquity? and is it not obvious to

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every unprejudiced spectator, that our people, high and low, are totally corrupt, not only in morals, but also in principles? for it is too evident a truth to be denied, that we are departed from the doctrines of the reformation, and yet we keep up our fubfcriptions to the articles and homilies then established, which are entirely founded upon the certainty of the fall of mankind in Adam, and of their recovery in Jesus Christ. We were wholly ruined by the one, and we are wholly faved by the other. The fin of the one was imputed to us, as the righteoufness of the other is imputed to us. All the scripture is built upon these two truths, as well as the church of England. But no fooner does a clergyman venture to fpeak out upon these points, than he is immediately branded with the name of enthuliast, although he has declared, in the most folemn manner before God, his affent and confent to every thing contained in the articles and homilies upon the fall and redemption of mankind, and although the very persons, who abuse him, have done the same. Urge the plainest passages

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of scripture, appeal to your subscription, call upon reason, and summon matter of fact to bear testimony to the soberness of your faith, yet you cannot avoid an hard name. If you think of avoiding it, because you do not deserve it, you will find yourfelf mistaken. I made the same mistake, and fancied myfelf quite fafe, while I had the scripture, and the church, on my fide; until I found that a strong sufpicion had gone out among fome ministerial clergy, as if I was leaning a little matter, and inclining as it were fomething towards enthusiasm. And they suspected this, because I did not lean and incline towards them or their doctrines and practices; which most certainly I did not. Instead of defending the jew-bill, and the marriage-bill, I rather infifted upon the total corruption of mankind by the fall, and the freeness and fulness of redemption through Jefus Christ, and the necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to change and renew our corrupt hearts, in order to dispose them to receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, and to enable them to live a holy and a christian life. These onthuliails. doctrines

doctrines are now dreffed up by our great men in a bear-skin, and baited under the odious nick-name of Enthusiasm, and our people begin to join the cry, and to fancy, that a man must be a little tinetured with enthusiasm, before he will make himself fo ridiculous, as to defend these exploded doctrines. But if others fear a nick-name from this quarter, I do not. The minifterial clergy are welcome to call me what they pleafe. I honour their reproach: for I find myfelf in the best of company by leaving theirs. The whole church of God, in the Old Testament and the New, believed and acted upon the truth of the doctrines before-mentioned. All the primitive fathers embraced them. The martyrs died, and fealed the belief of them with their blood. The protestant church has with one voice maintained them. And the church of England has made the acknowledgment of them absolutely neceffary for every one of her ministers, and therefore if it be enthusiasm to acknowledge what she has made necessary, then the church of England is turned enthufiast; and her best fons are the strongest enthusiasts. esain Bob

enthusiasts. And what then are we to think of those court divines, who expose their brethren, and ridicule them under the disgraceful name of Enthusiasts, for no other reason, but because we make a conscience of our oaths and subscriptions, and dare not risque our eternal salvation for any present honour or preserment.

The generality of readers may not perhaps be acquainted with the true state of the case, and therefore it may be useful to them to shew upon what sooting these doctrines stand, which are now exploded under the odious name of enthusiasm. I will carry my enquiry no higher up than the reformation of the church of England, and will endeavour to convince the reader, that if we are enthusiasts for abiding by the doctrines of the reformation, then these persons must be something much worse, who have subscribed to those doctrines, and yet have departed from them.

The fall of mankind in Adam, their corruption, their forfeiture through and in him are now openly denied. But hear what our church fays upon these points.

In the office for public baptism, we have these words, "Forasmuch as all men are "conceived and born in sin, and that "our saviour Christ saith, none can enter "into the kingdom of God, except he be "regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost." Mind, we are conceived in sin, and then born in sin, and it is necessary to be born anew of the holy Spirit. The ninth article explains the matter thus:

"Original fin standeth not in the fol"lowing of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and cor"ruption of the nature of every man,
"that naturally is engendered of the
"offspring of Adam, whereby man is
"very far gone from original righteous"ness, and is of his own nature inclined
"to evil, so that the sless lusteth always
"contrary to spirit."

The homilies are full of the same doctrine. The second part of the sermon on the misery of man has these words. "Thus "we have heard, how evil we be of ourselves, how of ourselves, and by ourselves,

" felves, we have no goodness, help, or fal-" vation, but contrariwife, fin, damnation, " and death everlasting: which, if we deep-" ly weigh and confider, we shall the better " understand the great mercy of God, and " how our falvation cometh only by Christ: " for in ourselves (as of ourselves) we " find nothing whereby we may be de-" livered from this miserable captivity " into the which we are cast through the " envy of the devil, by breaking of God's " commandment in our first parent Adam. "We are all become unclean, but we " all are not able to cleanfe ourselves, nor " make one another of us clean. We " are by nature the children of God's " wrath, but we are not able to make " ourselves the children and inheritors " of God's glory. We are sheep that run " astray, but we cannot of our own power " come again to the sheepfold, so great is " our imperfection and weaknefs."

These words want no comment; they describe our natural corruption by the fall in such clear and express terms, that all the art of sophistry cannot explain them away. I will confirm their testimony by

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two bishops of our church, that by the mouth of two witnesses the truth may be established. Bishop Wilkins on prayer has these words,

" All the pravity and baseness, which

" fills up every part and power about us,

" are but diffusions of our original cor-

" ruptions. What a world of mischief

" is there in our feveral parts? our wills,

" affections, our tongues, eyes; and yet

" all thefe are but as little rivulets; the

" fountain, or rather the fea that feeds

" them, is our corrupt nature."

Bishop Beveridge shall be my other authority; the title of the fourth article of his private thoughts is this,

"I believe that I was conceived in fin,

" and brought forth in iniquity; and that

" ever fince I have been continually con-

" ceiving mischief, and bringing forth

" vanity."

" This article of my faith I must of ne-

" ceffity believe, whether I will or no;

" for if I could not believe it to be true,

" I should therefore have the more cause

to believe it to be so; because, unless

" my heart was naturally very finful and corrupt,

" corrupt, it would be impossible for me " not to believe that which I have fo " much cause continually to bewail; or, " if I do not bewail it, I have still the " more cause to believe it; and there-" fore, am fo much the more perfuaded " of it, by how much the lefs I find my-" felf affected with it. For, certainly, " I must be a hard hearted wretch indeed. " fteeped in fin, and fraught with corrup-" tion to the highest, if I know myself so " oft to have incenfed the wrath of the " most high God against me, as I do, " and yet not be fensible of my natural " corruption, nor acknowledge myfelf to " be, by nature a child of wrath, as well " as others. For I verily believe, that the " want of fuch a due fense of myself, ar-" gues as much original corruption, as " murder and whoredom do actual pollu-"tion. And I shall ever suspect those to " be the most under the power of that " corruption that labour most, by argu-"ments, to divest it of its power." " And, therefore, for my own part, I " am refolved, by the grace of God, ne-

" ver to go about to confute that by wil-

mon

" ful arguments, which I find fo true by

" woeful experience. If there be not a " bitter root in my heart, whence pro-" ceeds fo much bitter fruit in my life and " conversation? alas! I can neither set " my head nor heart about any thing, " but I still shew myself to be the sinful " offspring of finful parents, by being " the finful parent of a finful off-" fpring; nay, I do not only betray " the inbred venom of my heart, by poi-" foning my common actions, but even " my most religious performances also " with fin. I cannot pray, but I fin; I " cannot hear, or preach a fermon, but " I fin; I cannot give an alms, or re-" ceive the facrament, but I fin; nay, I " cannot fo much as confess my fins, but " my very confessions are still aggrava-" tions of them; my repentance needs to " be repented of, my tears want washing, " and the very washing of my tears needs " still to be washed over again with the " blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not " only the worst of my sins, but even the " best of my duties, speak me a child of " Adam. Infomuch, that whenfoever I " reflect upon my past actions, methinks " I cannot but look upon my whole life, -90 W " from

" from the time of my conception to this

" very moment, to be but as one conti-

" nued act of fin." The state of the defined

" And whence can fuch a continued

" stream of corruption flow from, but

" from the corrupt cistern of my heart?

" and whence can that corrupt ciftern of

" my heart be filled, but from the corrupt

" fountain of my nature? cease, there-

" fore, O my foul, to gainfay the power

" of original fin within thee, and labour

" now to fubdue it under thee. But why

" do I fpeak of my fubduing this fin my-

" felf? furely, this would be both an ar-

" gument of it, and an addition to it.

" 'Tis to thee, O my God, who art both

" the fearcher and cleanfer of hearts, that

" I defire to make my moan: 'tis to thee

" I cry out in the bitterness of my foul.

" O wretched man that I am, who shall

" deliver me from the body of this death?

" who shall? Oh! who can do it but

" thyself? arise thou therefore, O my

" God, and shew thyself as infinitely mer-

" ciful in the pardoning, as thou art in-

" finitely powerful in the purging away "my fins." you maint your an domail

CONTRACT IN

These words so clearly describe the great truth, which I have endeavoured to establish in the following lectures, that I could not avoid citing them at full length. And now, if the reader will sum up the evidence, and impartially review what our articles, and homilies, and our bishops have taught concerning the corrupt sallen state of mankind, he will certainly acquit us of the charge of enthusiasm, who say nothing more than they have said, and who are obliged by our subscriptions to say all that they have said.

The second doctrine of christianity, which is now ridiculed under the name of enthusiasm, is the free and full redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ, by whom we are justified from all the sinfulness and miseries of the fall.

The thirteenth article absolutely excludes every work of ours from having any hand in justifying us, and states the case thus, "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his fpirit, are not pleasant to God, foras"much as they spring not of faith in Iesus

" Jesus Christ, neither do they make men

" meet to receive, or as the school au-

" thors fay, deserve grace of congruity;

" yea rather, for that they are not done,

" as God hath willed and commanded

" them to be done, we doubt not but

" they have the nature of fin."

The title of the fecond homily is this,

" A fermon on the falvation of mankind

" by ONLY Christ our Saviour, from sin

" and death everlafting." This homily

" is divided into three parts, the last be-

" gins with these words, " It hath been

" manifestly declared unto you, that no

" man can fulfil the law of God, and

" therefore by the law all men are con-

" demned; whereupon it followeth ne-

" ceffarily, that fome other thing should

" be required for our falvation, than the

" law : and that is a true and lively faith

" in Christ bringing forth good works,

" and a life according to God's com-

" mandments. And also you heard the

" ancient fathers minds of this faying,

" faith in Christ only justifieth man, so

" plainly declared, that you fee that the

" very true meaning of this proposition

" or faying, we be justified by faith in "Christ only (according to the meaning " of the old ancient authors) is this: we " put our faith in Christ, that we be justified tised by him only, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ only, and by no " virtue or good works of our own, that is in us, or that we can be able to have, " or to do, for to deserve the same. Christ " himself only, being the cause merito-" rious thereof."

Bishop Reynolds has explained the doctrine in the same manner in the folio edition of his works printed 1658, p. 251.

"Justification that is by faith is of meer grace and favour, no way of work or merit: for the act whereby faith justifies is an act of humility, and self-dere-liction, and holy despair of any thing in ourselves, and a going to Christ, a receiving, a looking towards him, and his all-sufficiency; so that as Mary said of herself, so we may say of faith, the Lord hath respect unto the lowliness of his grace, which is so far from looking inward for matter of justification, that

"itself as it is a work of the heart, 76 cre"dere, doth not justify, but only as it
"is an apprehension or taking hold of
"Christ. For as the hand in the very
"receiving of a thing, must needs first
"make itself empty; (if it be full before,
"it must let all that go, ere it can take
"hold on any other thing) so faith being
"a receiving of Christ, John i. 12. must
"needs suppose an emptines in the soul
"before."

My good Bishop Beveridge is of the same opinion. In the eighth article of his private thoughts he has these words,

"Tis a matter of admiration to me, how any one, that pretends to the use of his reason, can imagine, that he fhall be accepted before God, for what comes from himself! for how is it possible, that I should be justified by good works, when I can do no good works at all before I be justified? my works cannot be accepted as good, 'till my person be so, nor can my person be accepted by God, till first engrafted into Christ; before which engrafting into the true vine, 'tis impossible I vol. IV.

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" should bring forth good fruit, for the " plowing of the wicked is fin, fays So-" lomon. Prov. xxi. 4. Yea the facri-" fices of the wicked are an abomination " to the Lord. Ch. xv. 8. and if both the " civil and spiritual actions of the wicked " be fin, which of all their actions shall " have the honour to justify them before " God? I know not how it is with " others, but for my own part I do not " remember, neither do I believe, that " I ever prayed in all my life time with " that reverence, or heard with that at-" tention, or received the facrament with " that faith, or did any other work what-" foever with that pure heart and fin-" gle eye, as I ought to have done. In-" fomuch that I look upon all my righ-" teoufnesses but as filthy rags, and it is " in the robes only of the righteoufnefs " of the Son of God, that I dare appear " before the majesty of heaven."

I leave the reader to make his own remarks upon these authorities; for if he should deny the truth of the doctrine. which they maintain, yet he cannot poffibly deny, that they do maintain it, and there-

therefore if we are enthulialts for infifting upon the free and full redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ by whom we are justified from all the miferies of the fall, then our articles, and homilies, and the most pious and learned of our bishops, have not only led the way into this enthusiasm, but have also compelled us to walk in it; and therefore the hard name should fall upon them, and not upon us.

There is another doctrine, which is mightily ridiculed at present, and that is the necessity of the grace of the holy Spirit to change and renew our corrupt nature in order to dispose us to receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, and to enable us to live a holy and a christian life. This is at present the very touchstone of enthuliasm. If you feem but to favour this opinion, you are immediately fufpeded of being a little brainfick, and the moment you speak out, you are supposed to be fit for Bedlam. And grave fober moralists, nay large folemn divines, give you over for a ruined man, and your very friends begin to be afraid, that you Yas B 2 will

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will lose your usefulness. This treatment is unaccountable, and I believe will appear so to the candid reader, if he will but impartially consider the tenth article of our church.

"The condition of man after the fall

" is fuch, that he cannot turn and pre-

" pare himself by his own natural strength

" and good works to faith and calling

" upon God, without the grace of God

" by Christ preventing us, that we may

" have a good will and working with us,

" when we have that good will."

The first part of the homily for Whitfunday has these words,

"It is the holy Ghost, and no other

" thing, that doth quicken the minds of

" men, stirring up good and godly moti-

" ons in their hearts, which are agree-

" able to the will and commandment of

" God, fuch as otherwise of their own

crooked and perverse nature they

" should never have. That which is

born of the Spirit is Spirit; as who

" should fay, man of his own nature is

st fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught,

" finful and disobedient to God, without

" any

"any fpark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the holy Ghost, who is the ONLY worker of our fanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus."

To the same effect bishop Reynolds in his sinfulness of sin, p. 140.

"Look into your hearts, and you shall "find a very hell of uncleanness, full of deep, and unsearchable deceit and "wickedness, full of hardness: no sins, no judgements, no mercies, no allurements, no hopes, no fears, no promises, no instructions, able to startle, to awaken, to melt or shape it to a better image, without the immediate ommipotency of that God which melts the mountains, and turns stones into sons of Abraham."

In the fame strain bishop Beveridge, whom I admire so much, because he was as great an enthusiast as myself,

Refolution III.

"I am resolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the divine grace; so I will not pretend to merit any favour from God, upon ac-

" count of any thing I do for his glory

" and fervice.

"And indeed I may very well put this
"resolution among the rest, for should I
"resolve to perform my resolutions by
"mine own strength, I might as well re"solve never to perform them at all: for
"truth itself, and mine own wosul experi"ence hath convinced me, that I am not
"able of myself so much as to think a good
"thought: and how then shall I be able
"of myself, to resolve upon rules of holi"ness, according to the word of God, or
"to order my conversation according to
"these resolutions, without the concur"rence of the divine grace."

If the reader will weigh these authorities carefully and impartially, I am very

very certain, that he will acquit me of the charge of enthuliasm: for upon their evidence every minister of the church of England is bound to believe, that all men fell in Adam, and that free and full redemption is offered to all men in Jefus Christ, by whose good Spirit our fallen nature is to be restored, and we may have grace and power to live a holy and a christian life. This is my faith. In this I hope to live and die. And if our court brethren reckon me an enthusiast for embracing it, are they not diffenters for rejecting it? for do they not diffent from the articles and homilies of their own church, and from their own fubscriptions? and an enthusiast, dress him up in ever fo ridiculous a light, is a more amiable character, than a diffenter of this stamp, who fets his hand to one thing, and his heart to another, who fubscribes to what he does not believe, and who has most folemnly engaged before God to build up those very doctrines, which he is trying to preach down. An enthusiast, with all his mistakes, may be an honest man, but fuch persons arewhat

what shall I call them? furely not honest men. Reader, give them their proper name. Suppose the church of England had forced us to fubscribe to enthufiastic doctrines, and we were enthusiasts enough to believe them, certainly we are less blameable, than these persons, who do not believe them, and yet do fubscribe to them, rather than not be candidates for the high honours and revenues of the church. If they despise me, I shall not envy them. Let me be poor with a good conscience, and let them be rich. Let me be a despised enthusiast, and let them be highly honoured. May God make me thankful for what I hope for in the other world, and let them enjoy as much as they can get in this.

And now, reader, let me ask thee one plain question, and I beg of thee to answer it impartially. After what has been said, dost thou really take me to be an enthusiast? if thou dost, only consider, that what thou callest enthusiasm in me is the doctrine of scripture, and of the articles and homiles of the church of England, and of her soundest bishops and ministers

in her better days. But if thou givest me this hard name, because my brethren do not preach up the fame doctrines, which I do, how is that my fault? If they pay no regard to their fubscriptions, why shouldest thou load me with reproach for their crime? if they diffent from the church, is that any reason why thou shouldest dissent from it, or why thou shouldest think the worse of me for not diffenting? but if thou wilt nevertheless call me an enthusiast, without any reason, nay against all reason, then I will learn to bear it. And may God forgive thee, as I do from my heart, but I pray thee read no farther; stop here; throw the book into the fire, and it will fave thee a good deal of vexation: and when thou art more open to conviction, perhaps I may lay fomething before thee that may be of fervice. In the mean time farewel.

But, reader, if thou dost not take me to be an enthusiast, I thank thee for thy good opinion. Peruse the following lectures, and compare them with the doctrines of scripture and of the reformation, and I doubt not but thou wilt be fully convinced

vinced of the antiquity and foundness of what is here advanced. Only let me give thee a friendly caution against being misled by a fet of insidel writers, who pretend to give characters of books, which they never read, in a thing called The Monthly Review, in which I have feen every found doctrine of christianity ridiculed and blasphemed, and every damnable herefy openly defended and maintained. I expect no favour from these men. I desire none. To be spoken of well by them would be indeed reproach; their abuses will do me fervice, and they may load me with enthusiasm, I will carry it patiently, and would fuffer any infamy or torment upon earth, rather than be answerable for their horrid blasphemies against Jehovah and his Christ. And I hope, reader, that the evidence, which I have laid before thee, will prevail against the scandal of these monthly reviewers. If thou art as indifferent about what they fay of me, as I am, it will not move thee at all; but thou wilt think the better of me the more I am abused by them.

And

And whenever thou feeft an author degraded and vilified by them, if thou wilt take my advice, buy the book, depend upon it there is fomething very excellent in it, and I dare promife thou wilt never be difappointed.

I have nothing more, kind reader, to offer thee at present, but to commend thee to the grace and bleffing of almighty God, who will I hope accompany thee in the reading of these lectures, and render them the means of making thee more thankful to Jesus Christ. And if thou dost indeed receive any benefit from them, give him all the glory. I expect no reward but to be remembered in thy prayers. And if thou wilt always mention me in thy addresses to the throne of grace, then I shall be bound to pray for thee. And may God hear us both, and enrich thee and me with all his graces and bleffings in heavenly things through Jesus Christ.

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PSALM CHINE, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

THE book of Pfalms is a treasury of divine knowledge. It contains a complete collection of facred hymns, which were composed in praise of the blessed Jesus—whose miraculous birth—whose life and actions—sufferings and death—resurrection and ascension—and investiture and supreme power on the throne of glory—his gathering the church out of all lands—and protecting

ing it to the end of the world, against its enemies-and then putting it in possession of eternal glory—are the fubjects here treated of. And they are the most noble and elevated subjects in themselves, and besides they are the most interesting to every believer. Every part of them is full of wonder and miracle, which deferve his greater attention and esteem, because each of them was done for his falvation. And the author, who undertook to write upon these subjects, has not fallen below their dignity: he has recommended them to us by all the graces of language, and the fublimity of fentiment. His poetry is worthy of himself, and raises up to the merits of that adorable person whom it celebrates: for it came from heaven. The Pfalms were not the compofition of king David, or the flights of his poetical imagination; he was only the scribe, who copied them from the dictates of the all-wife Spirit: they are indeed the inspiration of the Almighty, whose the matter is, and from whom the words themselves proceeded. And if any persons doubt of it, let them take any one description of nature out of the Pfalms and compare it with what the best heathen authors have said on the same subject, and they will fee reason enough to be abashed and confounded at the abject poverty of the human genius, when put in competition with the infinite perfection of the inspired volume. And how should it be otherwise? the heathers Poli had

had no fuch fubject, nor no fuch inspirer. They were ignorant of the person and excellencies of the great deliverer of mankind, and how then could they fing his praises? or if they had known of him, yet they had no infinitely wife author, no eternal Spirit to dictate to them: their highest poetry was but the work of men, and of very ignorant men too: but this collection of hymns was indeed the work of God, and coming from him, it is as much fuperior to any human composition, as the infinite Author is superior to his creatures. On this account it deserves our greatest esteem and veneration, and we cannot value it too much; fince we have here a richer treasury of heavenly knowledge, than is any where elfe to be met with. And may we look upon it in this light, and treat it accordingly, may it be our continual fludy and delight, until we enter into the spirit of these divine hymns, and reap all the instruction and profit from them, which God intended they should be the means of administering to his church.

And I hope the same Spirit who recorded this particular hymn, which I purpose to explain in the course of these lectures, will be graciously pleased to accompany us in the explanation of it, and to give us his blessing. He left it upon record, as a lesson of gratitude, to inspire us with thanksgiving and praise to our blessed Saviour, and we always want to be stirred up to the prac-

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tice of this duty. Our hearts are strangely averse to it—they are by nature unholy and unthankful-and whatever we may talk of our fancied moral rectitude, and how pleafing a thing it is to be grateful to one another, yet with respect to God we are not, nor is it pleasing to us to endeavour to be grateful: for we are always, every moment of our lives, receiving mercies from God; but how few moments do we spend in making proper acknowledgements for them? and they who endeavour the most to be fincerely thankful, yet often find their affections cold and languid, and want fresh motives to warm and inflame them: and even they, who have the greatest knowledge of the abundant mercies of God their Creator and Redeemer, and have a grateful fense of them, yet freely confess, that they are not fo grateful as they could wish, and it grieves them to find, that they do not love God in fo perfect a degree as they ought to love him. And therefore the fubject of this Pfalm will be useful to us all: we all stand in need of every affistance, which can help us to render proper thanksgiving and praise to our sovereign Lord and Saviour. And the holy Spirit here offers us his affiftance: he left us this hymn to be the means of inspiring us with grateful hearts, and he will doubtless accompany his own means with his own grace. May he help us to meditate upon it with devout and humble tempers, that He, who

who is now in the midft of us, and from whom no fecrets are hid, may dispose us to make a right use of his facred word, and may pour down his grace plentifully upon us, filling our souls with praise and gratitude to the God of our fall vation.

Before I enter upon the distinct consideration of the several parts of the Psalm, I judge it will be useful to lay before you a general plan of the whole, that you may afterwards more readily sollow me, when I come to particulars. And this shall be my present subject. Upon the first reading of the Psalm every believer will observe the principal scope and design of it, which are contained under these four points.

First, We are called upon to be thankful for redemption in the three first verses.

Secondly, From the 4th verse to the 33d, the reasons for our thankfulness are assigned, which are taken from God's redeeming us from the lowest state of sin and misery. And

Thirdly, From his manner of protecting us after we are redeemed and brought into his church, from the 34th to the 42d verse. And

Fourthly, In the two last verses we have the application, exhorting us to study and to understand those mercies of redemption, that we may be full of thanksgiving and praise for them.

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This is the general plan. The Author is the holy Spirit. The subject is thanksgiving to Christ the Redeemer. The motives, here urged, to incite us to practife this duty, are taken from the many great and inestimable blessings of redemption. In order to give us clear and just ideas of this redemption, the holy Spirit has felected four images from nature, to represent the exquisite distress and misery of man in his natural state; they are the most striking images, which he who knows our hearts could fet before us, and they are fo highly finished, that they want no grace or ornament which infinite wifdom itself was able to give them. He compares us while we lay in our natural fallen state, first to men who have lost their way in a desolate wilderness, and are ready to perish with hunger; fecondly, to men, who are fallen into the pit of darkness and the shadow of death, where they lay bound in mifery and iron; thirdly, to men, who have fuch a weak and viciated appetite, that they loath even the fmell of wholesome; meat; and fourthly, to men, who are in the utmost distress at sea in a violent storm. These four images put together make a complete picture of our miserable fallen condition; and the persons who are in this condition, are supposed in the Pfalm to be brought to a deep fense of its mifery—they feel their guilt, and dread its punifhment-conscience is awakened and alarmed-

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and the fmart and anguish of it grow insupportable. This feems very afflicting, but it is the work of God. He makes them feel their mifery, that the fense of it may force them to feek relief, where only it is to be found, for no fooner do they fend up their petitions to the throne of grace, than the almighty Saviour instantly fends them deliverance, as it is remarked in each of these four instances, that when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, then he delivered them out of their diftress. He was disposed to grant them help, long before they were willing to receive it. And fuch was his redeeming love, fo abundant were the riches of his mercy to those distressed objects, that he not only delivered them, but also bestowed upon them every manner of thing that is good. Although he had freely lifted them up from the lowest state of fin and mifery, yet he never once upbraided them with their former wretchedness, never withheld his loving kindness, nor stopped the current of his favours; but pardoned them, and justified them, and ftill went on fanctifying them, until he placed the crown of eternal glory upon their heads. Oh! what a love was this! what infinite mercy was it to take these miserable sinners from the vileft fink of corruption, and to exalt them to be the most glorious faints in heaven! Does not this call aloud for your gratitude? Is not this the highest instance of God's redeeming C 2 mercy

mercy-of that very mercy which is faid to be over all his works: for it is to us finners, above them all in degree, and beyond them all in duration. And how then can we refrain from that just tribute of praise, which the holy Spirit calls upon us under each of these four instances to pay to our great deliverer. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth, for the children of men. After these four instances of man's exquifite diffress and mifery by nature, and of his full and perfect recovery by grace, the Pfalmist goes on to describe the flourishing state of the gentile church, when the jewish should be cast off and rejected. And this part of the Pfalm is like the preceding, elevated and fublime. From the 32d to the 39th verse, the christian church is represented under the image of a well-watered country, where the face of nature is all verdant and blooming, where the earth produces its grain, the trees their fruit in great abundance, where you fee plenty fmiling around you, and peace fecuring the possession, and grace giving a relish to the enjoyment of this happy scene. God thus turneth the wilderness into a standing water-and the dry ground into water-fprings, and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may fow the field, and plant vineyards, which may yield them fruits of increase: he bleffeth them also, &c. Such is the gentile church, voreim.

church but the jewish, now cast off and rejected, is compared to a desolate wilderness, where there is neither standing water, nor water-springs, where you see nothing growing, not the least verdure appears. There is not one single field sown with grain. Not one slourishing tree lists up its fruitful head, neither the olive nor the vine take root in this barren soil, so that there is neither wine to make glad the heart of man, nor oil to make him of a cheerful countenance. The whole prospect is one dry desolate wilderness.

And this part of the Pfalm is fulfilled. The christian church has been in this flourishing condition, and the jewish church is now like a fandy wilderness—neither refreshed with the dew of heaven, nor made fertile by the streams of divine grace: and for want of their genial influence, it is so parched and burnt up, that nothing grows either for use or ornament.

And the same gracious Governor and Saviour of the world, who rejected the Jews, and cast them into this barren wilderness, because they rejected him, and cast him off from being Lord over them, can and will also humble us in the same manner, if we be guilty of the same crime. The present wretched state of the Jews is a standing lesson to those persons, who will not receive Jesus for their God: and may his grace dispose them

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them to make a right use of this lesson, lest it should soon be exemplified in their own destruction: for we of this church and kingdom have much to fear from our national infidelity. Several churches and kingdoms have been destroyed for this crime, and the holy Spirit in the 39th and 40th verses of this Psalm declares, that this is the common method of our Lord's providence. Whenever a people after various calls and admonitions from heaven (and we have had many fuch lately) still remain incorrigible in their deiffical opinions about Christ's divinity, and their treasonable practices against him, then his good Spirit no longer strives with them, but gives them over to a reprobate mind-And again they are diminished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and forrow. The christians are certainly diminished and brought low—they are diminished in number, and brought low in circumstances, infomuch that we have great reason to apprehend our candlestick may be soon removed, and the light of the pure gospel may shine no more among us. Were it not that our God is good, we might expect to be finally cut off: but the mercies of Jesus are infinite. He has borne with us long. Oh! that his long fuffering may not be wearied out, but may have the defired effect, and lead us to repentance. So iniquity thall not be our ruin. Bleffed Jefus. spare us a little, and let our people have one

more offer of thy grace and mercy, before the destroying angel be sent to visit us, and cut us off.

After this striking account of the various states and revolutions of the church, there follows in the 41st verse, a most sweet promise to the few poor followers of the Redeemer-Yet fetteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor in spirit he removes out of the reach of affliction-the God, in whom they trust, will protect and keep them fafe amidst public calamities. No evil shall come nigh to hurt them. When a nation is vifited for their infidelity, and is scourged with the sharp rod of war or pestilence, then the destroying angel shall have no power over them. Their almighty God and Saviour will encamp around them; and then fays the prophet, "Though an hoft of men " were fet against me, yet would not my heart " be afraid, and though there rofe up war against " me, yet will I put my trust in him." He trusted in God's promises, and he had good reason: for he has engaged to be an impregnable wall of brass around his faithful people, when they are threatened with perfecution or diffress: and must not these persons be quite out of the reach of evil, who are furrounded with a brazen wall, and the Almighty himfelf guards and defends it? and this was his promife to Jeremiah, and through him to every believer ylon

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in the same circumstances, Jer. xv. 20. " And I, " fays God, will make thee unto this people a " fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against " thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, " for I am with thee to fave thee, and to deliver " thee, faith the Lord." He will fave and deliver his people, and they shall be at peace, while the rest of the world is at war: for he fetteth the poor on high out of the reach of affliction, and then it follows, he maketh him housholds, like a flock of sheep. No shepherd can watch over his flock with a more tender care, or provide better for their welfare, than the great shepherd and bishop of souls provides for his flock: under his most affectionate and almighty protection, each of them is fo completely happy, that he can truly declare-" The "Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack " nothing." And having thus experienced the love and care of the chief thepherd, how can they withhold from him, that just tribute of praise and gratitude, which he demands?

These are such great and weighty points, and we are so nearly concerned in them, that we ought not to pass them by unnoticed; for our present and eternal falvation depend on our interest in them, and therefore they should be constantly in our thoughts, that by meditating upon them properly, they may be the means of inspiring us with continual gratitude. And the holy

holy Spirit recorded them in this Pfalm, for this very purpose, and every believer applies them to the fame end. His redemption---the guilt and mifery from which he was reedeemed-the free grace of the redeemer-the great and endlefs bleffings, which he purchased for us freely, and which he bestows without money, and without price-bleffings truly ineftimable--in this world the greatest we are capable of receivingin the next world the highest he has to give, and of the fame duration with himfelf, even infinite and eternal bleffings; who can think on these bleffings without thanksgiving? for what must your hearts be, if there be any little dirty groveling object upon this earth, which engages your thoughts, and fixes your affections in preference to these infinite and eternal bleffings? Oh! what low creatures are we, notwithstanding our boafted dignity, and fancied rectitude; how abjectly base are we, to prefer shadows to fubstance, and time to eternity? to spend our lives in the concerns of this perifhing world, and to have no thought or care about the bufiness of the eternal world? this is so irrational and abfurd, and fo monstrously wicked, that itis indeed finking ourselves below the beasts that, perish. And although never did more men act this low part, than at present, yet was there never more boasting of the dignity of human nature. And what is the worst of all, our; moral vhup

moral rectitude, and our other high metaphylical notions are so far from setting us right, that they indifpose us to receive the only remedy which can cure us. Where nature fails, what can come in to our aid, but grace ! and the grace of God is now an exploded opinion. To talk of it is mere enthusiasm, and to urge the scriptures which fpeak of it, and which maintain its necessity, this is called religious rant and madness: for the metaphysician wants none of the aids of grace to lead him into all truth, nor does the moralist want any assistance from grace to enable him to practice the whole duty of man. And it can be to little purpose, to perfuade persons under these strong delusions to think seriously about their redemption, and to take a view of their mifery without it; for they are prejudiced They love and cherish the opposite opinions. And to work upon men of these tempers, requires fome power fuperior to human. God alone is equal to it. And may be open the eyes of this deluded generation, that they may be disposed to hear the comfortable doctrines delivered in this Pfalm, and to receive them in fuch a manner, that they may fee the wonderful mercies of God in redemption, and may, together with the righteous, rejoice and give thanks. And when this great and happy event shall be brought about, may our almighty God and Saviour effect it foon, then it follows in the 42d verse, All inimoral quity

quity shall stop her mouth. The adversary shall be silenced. The enemies of our Lord, seeing his tender care and watchful providence over his people, and finding all their attempts against them unsuccessful, shall hold their peace. They shall be silenced, if not convinced. They shall be consounded at the wonders, which the Lord shall work for the salvation of men, and shall have no power to object, either to the Redeemer, or to his redeemed people—All iniquity shall stop her mouth.

O! that will be an happy day! when shall we fee it? when shall iniquity be struck dumb? we hear it daily in our streets uttering hard speeches against the Lord and against his Christ-against them, although our Lord's divinity be fecured by the fundamental laws of this land, yet we have volumes upon volumes published-against them the more polite part of the world retail the daring blasphemies of these volumes--- and against them the common people begin to fuck in greedily the blasphemies of their superiors. When shall we see an end of these impieties? O God let it be foon. Let iniquity foon stop her mouth, and let it never be opened again, to object to those wife and gracious methods, by which thou hast decreed to bring many fons unto glory through Jefus Chrift.

I am now come to the 43d verse, where the holy Spirit calls upon every reader to meditate upon

upon the great fubjects treated of in this Pfalm, "Whoso is wife will observe these things"whoever has a true tafte and relish for spiritual matters, and is bleffed with the true wifdom that is from above, he will observe these things: He will make his remarks upon them with judgment. He will meditate upon them often, Rudy them much, and delight himself in them greatly: and therefore having this Pfalm, and the other scriptures for his direction, whereby he may investigate and trace out the ways of providence, it will be the whole bent of his foul to attain this wildom. And there is no part of the fubject, which affords more curious, and at the fame time more interesting meditations, than the view of the wonders which God hath done for the redemption of man. Every time they are judiciously reviewed, we see fresh matter for adoration and praise. Our hearts grow warm with the fense of them, our affections kindle. and our love to our most blessed Redeemer is inflamed. Whoso is wife will meditate thus to his profit, and he will so observe, so remark what he hears and reads, as to grow the wifer for hearing, and the better for reading. And would to God every one of us was wife to observe the great points of our redemption. The holy Spirit calls upon us to remark them, and he declares that we are not wife, unless we observe them. Whoso is wife, will observe these things. If this be noqu

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the only wifdom, O how few of us are wife indeed---how very few are wife in the judgment of the holy Spirit. Most of us are wife enough in other matters, and are deeply read in what does not concern us; but in this great point we are very babes. We have not learned our first rudiments. And certainly we have been too long children in understanding; it is now high time to feek for wifdom, and there is no wifdom worth feeking but that which is here mentioned, viz. fuch wifdom as enables us to understand the wonderful works of God in our redemption, and then disposes us to practice what we underfland, and further gives us the power as well as the will to live up to it. And does wisdom, true and perfect wisdom, like this, grow upon our earth? Hear what a venerable patriarch thought of this matter, " But where shall wisdom? "be found? and where is the place of under-" flanding? man knoweth not the price thereof," " neither is it found in the land of the living," Job xxviii. 12. This was Job's opinion. If you refuse to subscribe to it, tell us, where is the true wisdom to be found? is it taught in any of the schools of modern philosophy? can the metaphysician foar high enough to the regions of this wifdom, and bring it down to mortal view? or can the professors of Ethics teach it us among the rules of their morality? alas! alas! it is far above the reach of their highest attainments

even to discover it, and much more to practice it: for the subjects on which it is exercised are the high and deep things of God, of which philosophy can know nothing. The great apoftle gives this reason (7 Cor. ii. 14.) " But the " natural man" (and would to God philosophers were not fuch) " receiveth not the things of " the spirit of God: for they are foolishness " unto him: neither can he know them, because "they are spiritually discerned." And this spiritual discernment is the wisdom that is from above. It is not a learned attainment, but it is the gift of the holy Spirit, and the proud philoforher fo much disdains to seek it from his grace, that he calls it extravagant enthusiasm, even to suppose that the holy Spirit will give it. But if this be enthusiasm the scripture is full of it. "The Lord, fays Solomon, giveth wifdom, out " of his mouth cometh knowledge and under-"ftanding" (Prov. ii. 6.) and it is written in the prophets-" And they shall be all taught of "God." And again in the New Testament; " if any of you lack wifdom?" What shall we do-go and fludy fystems of ethics, and read volumes of morality? No. We must take a method, that is now reckoned the highest madness of enthusiasm. " If any of you lack " wisdom, Says St. James, let him ask it of "God." How strangely this sounds-Ask it of God, what! is he the only giver of this wifdom?

wisdom? He is. For he giveth to all men, who ask it in faith, liberally, and upbraideth not. Let these men, who are wife above what is written, call it what they pleafe, to ask wisdom of God; yet these promises are clear and full, and the humble christian rests upon them, and knows them to be infallible: for he has experienced their truth. And may the almighty Spirit fo bring down and humble our natural pride, that we may all have this happy experience, and may find the last words of the Psalm verified in ourselves--whoso is wife will observe these things, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord, i. e. they shall know it clearly and fully, and they shall have a lively fense of it upon their hearts: for they had before made their remarks upon it, and had laid together their observations, and had applied them to use, and then the knowledge became experimental. And the original word, as well as the meaning of the paffage, justifies this construction: for the verb which we render, and they shall understand, is in the conjugation hithpael, which is peculiar to the facred tongue, and which is used here to denote, that they should build themselves up by this understanding; it should produce its proper effects upon themselves, and the end of knowing it should be fully answered. By which means it could not be a matter of mere fcience 5000

science or dry speculation, but would produce many great and bleffed consequences—enabling them to taste and see that the Lord was merciful, and filling their hearts with thanksgiving and praise for all his mercies.

I have now laid before you the general plan of the whole Pfalm-you fee the great fubject here treated of is redemption-and the proper disposition of mind, with which we are to confider it, is a thankful heart-and the holy Spirit recorded this facred hymn to be the means of exciting in us thankfulnefs. And may his grace and bleffing go along with thefe lectures upon it, and bring them home with fuch power and evidence to your hearts, that his gracious intentions in recording it may be fully answered And if it be the fincere defire of your fouls, if you indeed wish to find profit from thefe lectures, then I will only detain you, while I give you two or three short exhortations, relating to the general plan, which I have laid before tion: for the verb which we render, and they've

The first is an exhortation to the reading of the Pfalm, which I hope you will frequently do in private. It is an abstract of the whole bible is for the two great subjects of the Old Testament and the New, are man's fin and misery by nature, and his recovery by grace, and these are here clearly, though briefly discussed. You will there-

fore greatly profit from reading it, if you remember the four chief parts of what it consists, viz.

First, An exhortation to thanksgiving, in the three first verses, for redemption.

Secondly, The reasons for our thanksgiving from the 4th to the 33d verse, relating to man's misery before redemption. And

Thirdly, Reasons relating to Christ's manner of governing the church, after it is redeemed, from the 34th to the 42d verse. And

Fourthly, The application, exhorting us to ftudy and to understand these mercies of redemption, that our thanksgiving may flow from a grateful heart. The more you read the Psalm in this view, the better you will understand it, and the more reason you will find to admire its excellencies. And

Secondly, I would not only exhort you to read it much, but also to pray for that humble teachable temper, which alone can render the reading of it profitable to your souls. It is the word of God; it is the instruction which the all-wise Spirit has provided in order to inspire you with love and thankfulness to your most adorable Saviour. And when he vouchsafes to instruct you, hear with all humility, and learn of him the words of eternal life. Let his will be yours—his commandments your delight. But

Thirdly, Let it be chiefly remembered from whence the bleffing of all is to come: for nei-Vol. IV. D ther

ther can the humble frame of mind, nor the benefit arising from it, be attained by our own abilities. They must both come from one and the fame Spirit. God must first teach us the grace of humility, and then enable us to reap profit from it: for he is the giver of every good and spiritual gift. So that whenever you begin to read this or any other portion of scripture, if you defire it should be profitable to your fouls, always look up to the holy Spirit, and defire his gracious affiftance. This was the prophet's method, " Lord open thou mine eyes, that I " may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And these wondrous things we may also behold, if we read the law of God as he did, with humility and prayer. And if you defire to fee the wonderful wifdom of God in the plan of your redemption, you must use the prophet's words---Lord open thou mine eyes to fee it: for you could no more fee this wisdom, unless the day star was arisen and shone bright in your hearts, than you could fee these outward objects, unless the light of the fun shone in your eyes. And therefore convinced of this, let fo many of us as lack wisdom, now ask it of God, and I know of no words more fignificant and expressive, nor yet more devout and pious, than these of our own church, which I shall apply to the present occasion. dupment would ad it will with it. viewed the bleffing of all is to come for name

O almighty and eternal Spirit, who hast caused this facred hymn to be written for our learning, send down thy blessing upon our studies in it. And grant that we may in such wise hear it, read it, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlassing life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen,

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SERMON II.

PSALM CVII. 1, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: For his mercy endureth for ever: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

N the last lecture I laid before you the general plan of this facred hymn. The great fubject of it is thankfgiving. The motives to induce us to be thankful are taken from the mercies of We are bound to bless and praise his holy name for every instance of his goodness, but above all for that inestimable instance of his love, in redeeming us from the lowest state of sin and mifery, and then freely bestowing upon us pardon and peace in this world, and eternal life and glory in the next. The holy Spirit infifts chiefly upon this instance, trying to awaken in us some fense of gratitude for these bleffings of redemp-His arguments are the most likely to work upon our hearts, and therefore I will endeavour to open and explain them, trusting to his guidance, and hoping for his bleffing.

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And may he now take all our hearts into his protection, and drive away every vain intruding thought, which would either dissipate our attention, or distract our affections; and give us, O holy Spirit, the hearing ear, to know what it is to be thankful, and the understanding heart to be able to practice it, that when we finish our present meditations, we may be the better for them, and may be the more disposed to join in praise and thanksgiving to Jesus Christ our most adorable God and Saviour.

The holy Spirit has fet the bleffings of redemption before us in fo clear and firiking a light, that they, who are not affected with the view of them in this Pfalm, must be dead to all sense of gratitude. But I would hope there are not many fuch among you. Every one of you may not perhaps be actuated by the most lively and warm fentiments of thanks to your bleffed Redeemer, but you have no objection against having your hearts more inflamed with his love; rather you wish your hearts were more his, than they are; and that your affections were placed and fixed upon him with more delight. Come then, ye who are thus disposed, and hear how many powerful motives the holy Spirit has used to infpire you with fincere gratitude to the God of your falvation. "O give thanks unto the " Lord-for he is good-for his mercy endureth " for ever." Thus he begins the Pfalm, calling

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upon you to practice the sweet duty of thanksgiving, which arises from our experience of the Redeemer's mercies, and therefore we cannot but receive great delight, whenever we fo remember his mercies, as to find still stronger motives to bless and praise him for them. And this is what we are called upon to practice in the first words-O give thanks-and the duty may be thus defined. Thankfgiving is a grateful expression of praise, arising from an heart fensible of the mercies of redemption. Because I shall always use the word in this sense, I must defire you to remember, that by thankfgiving I mean, a grateful expression of praise, &c. It is fuch a grateful expression of praise, as comes from the heart: for no man will praise God until he has some sense and perception of God's mercy, and praise is not a lip-service, it does not consist in uttering a fet of thankful words; it is not the praise of the mouth, but of the heart. Religious praise is the service of the affections, and flows from true and hearty love to that object which we praise: for we are always ready enough to praise the thing that we delight in. Whatever is the dear object of our affections, on it we are lavish enough of our praises. The heart will command all the faculties to be where its treafure is-attending upon it with their tribute of praise. And if Jesus the Redeemer be our treafure, then we shall constantly attend upon him with ogu

with the praises of a grateful heart: but he cannot be our treasure, until we defire to have some interest in him, and therefore I add in the last words of the definition, that the heart must be fensible of the mercies of redemption: for it is certain we cannot be disposed to thank God for mercies, of which we have no defire to tafte. neither indeed will we thank him, unless we have a lively perception, and are perfectly fenfible of his mercies; confequently our thankfgiving will be according to our fense of them. If we find him bestowing upon us great and numerous and unmerited favours, then our thanks will rife in proportion to what we experience. But still he, who has no sense of God's mercies, can have no motive to offer him any thanks: because thanksgiving is only expressing with the mouth, and the other faculties what the heart feels; and therefore if the heart, which is the fpring, be not moved, it is impossible the other faculties should have any motion. The Pfalmist fays, "O praise the Lord, for it is a good thing " to fing praifes unto our God, yea, a joyful and " pleasant thing it is to be thankful:" here he supposes, that we must first rejoice in the mercies of God, before we can find it a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful for them; because we cannot return him praises with joy for that, in which we have found no joy. It is as impossible for us to rejoice in that thing, of which had ..

we have not an affectionate sense and perception, as it would be for a dead man to rejoice; and therefore thanksgiving can arise only from a grateful heart, which is sensible of the blessings of redemption.

This is the nature of the duty: the reasons for practifing it follow-O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good-he is effential goodness, being the origin and fountain from whence all created goodness flowed. Goodness in the Deity denotes that disposition, whereby he is inclined to communicate happiness. It was owing to this beneficent attribute, that he created the beautiful fystem of the world out of nothing, and made all the living creatures in it to share and partake of his goodness; and therefore after he had finished the works of creation and formation. he pronounced them all to be very good. And they were good, and they continued fo, until fin corrupted them. For fin brought in all evil, which is the opposite to goodness, and then the remembrance of God's former goodness only aggravated our guilt, and made our evil more inexcufable: and before our guilty consciences could be fet at rest, we must have a firm reliance upon fome more amiable attribute than goodnefs, which we finners had offended against, and which does not imply any disposition to forgive the offence. God had been good to the innocent, but he must be just to sinners. If he OW had

had freely exercifed his goodness to us while innocent, yet when we offended, we put ourfelves out of the reach of his goodness, and then justice took place: and when justice was extreme to mark what we had done amifs, what could finful wretched man hope for? nothing from goodness: because its former favours had been abused and repaid with ingratitude; therefore guilt and mifery must have been our portion for ever, unless fome more gracious attribute than goodness, should be revealed to us, and therefore the holy Spirit makes mercy, even eternal mercy, wait upon goodness, that it may become a proper subject of thanksgiving, "O give thanks " unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy " endureth for ever." Goodness was shewn to the innocent-mercy is for the guilty; and we can thank God for the goodness of creation, when we have experienced the mercies of redemption. Mercy is that disposition in the Deity, whereby he is inclinable to relieve the miserable: it is the attribute of pity and compassion, which can be exercised only upon them who are in distress. Mercy has for its object sin, with all its miserable consequences; and it is exercifed in removing them; and the person by whom it is exercifed is our most compassionate high priest Christ Jesus, to whose mercy it is owing that we were not confumed: for when goodness could no longer employ its kind offices (peech for

for us, then our merciful God was pleafed to bring into execution that gracious plan of redemption, which had been contrived before all worlds, and by which many fons were to be brought unto glory. The holy, bleffed, and glorious Trinity, out of infinite love and compassion, were pleafed to agree upon this plan, and to fultain distinct offices in the occonomy of it, and as their persons are equally infinite, their economical actions must consequently be equally infinite. God the Father covenanted to demand perfect fatisfaction for fin, and to accept the perfect fatisfaction made by the obedience and fufferings of God the Son, which he covenanted to make in our flead, and as our representative in the human nature. And God the holy Spirit covenanted to render the obedience and fufferings of Christ effectual to believers, and by his grace to carry on the whole work of redemption in their hearts. St. Paul affures us, that the covenant of grace, which is the fountain of all mercy, was made before the foundation of the world, and this he repeats in feveral of his epiftles. The Pfalmist teaches the same doctrine, and frequently calls upon us to thank God, because his mercy is for ever and ever-because his mercy is everlasting-and in the text, because his mercy endureth for ever; the word endureth is inferted by the translators a for there is no verb in the original; neither in strictness of fpeech ioi

speech could there be any: because there was no time, wherein this mercy was not exercised, neither will there be any time when the exercise of it will fail. It was begun before all worlds, when the covenant of grace was made, and it will continue to the ages of eternity, after this world is destroyed. So that mercy was, and is, and will be, for ever, and finful miferable man may always find relief from this eternal mercy, whenever the fense of his misery disposes him to feek for it. And does not this motive loudly call upon us to give thanks? because there is mercy with God-mercy to pity the miferableand even to relieve them-although they do not deferve it: for mercy is all free-grace and unmerited love. Oh! how adorable then and gracious is this attribute? how sweet is it and full of confolation to the guilty? may God bring all the comforts of it to your hearts, and if you defire, if you would know, what these comforts are, ask the Redeemed of the Lord, and they will tell you, that his mercies are great beyond description. They can fay, upon their own experience, that they have found the mercies of redemption to be in number, in value, and in duration, more and greater than they can express: and to their experience the holy Spirit refers you in the 2d verse, The redeemed of the Lord shall fay fo they shall fay that he is good, and that his mercies are eternal. What then is bondage this

this redemption of which they speak in such high terms? and why do they make it the chief subject of their thanksgiving? the reason sollows, because he redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Moses has given us in the law a clear and full idea of what we are to understand by the word gal, here rendered redeemed. If any person was either fold for a slave, or carried away for a captive, then his kinfman, who was nearest to him in blood, had the right and equity of redemption. But no other person was suffered to redeem. And fuch a kinfman is called the redeemer, when he paid down the price for which his relation was fold to be a flave, or paid the ranfom for which he was led captive. And there is another remarkable instance in the law, wherein it was provided, that in case any person was found murdered, then the nearest to him in blood was to profecute the murderer, and to bring him to justice, and this nearest relation thus avenging the murder is called by the fame name a redeemer. And how beautifully is the office of our great Redeemer represented under these three instances? he was to us such a Redeemer in spirituals, as these were in temporals: for fin had brought all mankind into flavery and captivity, and had murdered us. We are flaves to fin, and captives to fatan: St. Paul confesses both-fold unto fin, fays he, and led away captive under the law of fin. And in this state of bondage this

bondage and captivity we had a most cruel tyrant to reign over us, even he who was a murderer from the beginning, and who employed us in those flavish fervices, where we could find no peace in time, nor any rest to eternity: for he gave us no wages but death---death of the body to this world, and death of the foul from God in the next world for ever. O miserable man. who shall deliver thee, who shall redeem thee from the body of this death? Thou art entirely, eternally miserable in thyself; but thou mayest thank God, through Christ our Lord, that there is a Redeemer who is able to fave thee. He has every qualification which the law required in a Redeemer, and he is besides almighty: for he is true and very God, equal in all things with the Father and the holy Spirit; and as foon as fin was in the world, he entered upon his gracious office of Redeemer: for he was the lamb flain in type and figure from the foundation of the world. And when he had a body prepared for him, wherein he was to be flain indeed, and was made flesh of our flesh, then he completed the legal character of a Redeemer. When he was pleafed to unite our human nature to his divine, then he was nearest of kin to us. By this wonderful union he became our brother, and next to us in blood. And thus he was perfectly able to fulfil the law of our redemption, which fuffered none to have the right and equity of redeeming,

redeeming, except the nearest kinsman. And to this our God condescended. O! amazing instance of his divine love. That God should be united to man and partake of our human nature. that we might partake of his divine, this is the great mystery of godliness. We can never adore, never praise him enough for it, because by it we receive full redemption. This most high God, who was also man, united in one Christ, came into the world to redeem us. And the same person being both God and man, must merit for us as God, in what he did for us as man. Accordingly by the merits of his obedience and fufferings he paid the price of our redemption, and we were no longer the fervants of fin; and by his most precious blood shed upon the crofs, by his death and refurrection, he overcame both death, and him who had the power of death: and by delivering us in this manner from flavery and captivity, he fulfilled the third part of the Redeemer's office: for fatan was the murderer from the beginning, who had given both body and foul a mortal wound of fin. which was certain death, and eternal mifery. And the Redeemer came to avenge the murder. He took our cause in hand, as being our nearest kinfman, and it cost him his own life to avenge ours. He fled his own blood upon the crofs to avenge our blood, and he died that we might be brought back to life, and then he rose again to demon

demonstrate his victory over the infernal murderer. And he has now all power in heavenand earth, that he may effectually redeem every one, who defires to be freed from the flavery of fin, from the captivity of fatan, and the power of death. Such is our all-fufficient Redeemer! And when we know and taste of his redeeming love, how can we then forbear to be thankful? fince he has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy, we cannot be filent in his praifes: we must speak of them. He has been so good and gracious to us, that it would be acting against our own fense and feeling, if we did not praise his holy name: for we were in vile flavery to fin, and he redeemed us-we were in cruel captivity to fatan, and he redeemed us—we were under the power of death temporal and eternal, and he redeemed us. And can we possibly forget how miserable we were in ourselves, and yet how happy we are become in the Redeemer? and while we remember this, what must we be, if ever we ceafe to give him thanks and praifes? He was to us a most blessed and most loving Redeemer: for that he, whom all the heavenly host adore, would vouchsafe to look down with pity upon our wretched state, and would defcend from the throne of his eternal glory to vifit us vile finners---flaves---and captives---nay, would become our brother, our nearest kinsman, that he might be our lawful Redeemer-nay more, would Cheif

would come to fuffer and to die for his own rebellious creatures; this was the most wonderful condefension of our Lord Jesus. And ought it not to endear him to us exceedingly? should not our hearts overflow with gratitude, and our tongues inceffantly break forth into praise for fuch unmerited love? O may he raise our hearts, and exalt our affections from every lower object to the contemplation of his infinite love! There never was, nor is to be, any love like our Redeemer's to us; happy are we, if there be no love in our breafts, like what we bear to him! The love of our God, coming from heaven, taking our nature, obeying and fuffering in it, bleeding and dying upon the crofs to redeem us -us miferable vile finners, here is all that we can admire, here is all that we can adore. Jefus our Lord claims our highest admiration, our lowest adoration; so that his praises are a subject which can never be exhausted: for they are to be our employment and happiness for ever, and we become fitted for them, indeed we begin them, by our prefent thankfulnefs. O thou almighty Saviour, make us daily more and more thankful, that by the continual exercise of thankfgiving upon earth, we may be prepared to fing the praises of our redeeming God for ever and ever.

The next motive mentioned in the 3d verse, is peculiar to us heathen nations, viz. that

Christ

Christ " hath redeemed us and gathered us " out of all lands, from the east, and from the "west, from the north, and from the fouth." If any thing can inspire us with gratitude, this motive should prevail, because we cannot but feel the force of it, as it reminds us of that mifery, from which we in particular were redeemed. The Gentiles had wandered from God, and were fo loft and bewildered in the mazes of error and fuperstition, that nothing but the almighty love of our Lord Jesus could have gathered them together into one church. All the heathen world lay in darkness and in the shadow of death, until the fun of righteoufness arose upon them with the bright beams of the gospel: they were ignorant, immoral, idolatrous, and because they had no defire to retain God in their memory, he therefore gave them over to a reprobate mind; and then being utterly forfaken of him, they ran greedily into every kind of impurity and abominable uncleanness. St. Paul has given us a melancholy account of the Roman morals, at a time, when we have been taught, that polite learning flourished among them in its highest perfection. Read this first chapter to the Romans, and you will find that they were monsters of impiety, although they could write with all the elegance and beauty of classical learning. And the rest of the heathen nations were not indeed fo corrupt, but they were funk as low Vot. IV. E in

in ignorance and superstition as the Romans, and particularly our ancestors in this island, who were poor blind idolators; they used to worship stocks and stones, and to fall down before trees and groves. And when the face of the whole earth was thus covered with the dark night of idolatry and immorality, then it pleafed God to fend the day spring from on high to visit us. Our bleffed Redeemer came to call us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and to gather us into the mystical body of his church, out of all lands, from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the fouth. His church is the mystical body, of which he is the head, and whoever partakes of his redemption must be gathered from the world into this mystical body, and must be so united, as to become a true living member of it. It was foretold by Mofes-that unto Christ should the gathering of the people be-he was to gather the difperfed into one body. And the prophet Isaiah declares-" the Lord God which gathereth the out-casts of Israel faith, yet will I gather others " to him: for I will gather all nations and " tongues, and they shall come and fee my " glory." Happy for us, these prophesies are now fulfilled. The love of our gracious Redeemer hath gathered fome out of all nations and tongues: and bleffed be his holy name for that he is daily gathering more, who come to Christ.

Christ, and see his glory, and are thankful. O that more of the people were daily gathered unto him! we ought to pray earnestly for it, because there is no salvation for them, who are not gathered into his mystical body, and united as closely to it, as the branches of a vine are to the stock upon which they grow: for I am the vine, says the Redeemer himself, ye are the branches—abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

From hence it is evident, that our bleffed Redeemer has a myffical body, into which all the redeemed are gathered, and in which they are living members, united to their fovereign head, enlivened by his grace, and actuated and influenced by his good Spirit, and where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty—a liberty from error-a liberty from fin and fatan---a liberty from death and the grave, fo that in theliberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, there is full and plenteous redemption. And can perfons who partake of this redemption forbear to be thankful? it is impossible. While they have a lively fense of the Redeemer's love, they must be fpeaking his praifes; and they will retain this lively fense, so long as they remember from whence he redeemed them. When they lay dispersed he gathered them, when they lay in ignorance, he enlightened them. When they were in the groffest

idolatry, he converted them to the worship of the true God. When they were in the fink of fin and immorality, he brought them into the ways of righteousness, pardoning their past offences, by his merits; and enabling them by his grace to proceed in the work of fanctification: and having thus gathered them together, he united them to himself, and made them living members of his mystical body; and in this happy union, how many spiritual comforts and bleffings must they find? their hearts will certainly overflow with love and gratitude to their most adorable Redeemer, and it will be to them indeed a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful: for he claims all their affections—they would live only to himand therefore it would be really offering them violence to hinder them from fpeaking of him with the mouth, what the heart feels. He is fo much the delight of their fouls, that they had rather cease to breath, than cease to be thankful to their dearest Lord and Saviour. Daily will they be telling the wonders of his redemption, and giving thanks and honour unto him, so long as they have any being. And

May God enable every one of us to join our hearts and voices with theirs in giving praise and honour to our redeeming Lord. And having finished the paraphrase upon the three verses of the text, I come now to call upon you to join your thanksgiving with all the other members

of Christ's mystical body. You have heard what the duty is, it confifts in the fervice of a grateful heart, which is perfectly fensible of the divine love-having not only experienced God's goodness, but also his mercy, even the eternal mercy of the covenant of grace, being redeemed from the flavery of fin, from the captivity of fatan, and from the power of death, and these redeemed of the Lord cannot but speak with gratitude of what he has done for their fouls, especially fuch of the redeemed, who were gathered out of all lands, who were fcattered and alienated from God by fin, were in heathen idolatrous countries, out of the covenant of promife, and without hope in the world-when fuch persons are made to partake of the bleffings of redemption, how will their hearts burn within them? how will their affections be fired, and with what a pure flame will the fweet incense of their thanfgiving afcend up before God? certainly their fense of this redemption will fill their fouls with love and praise: for they will find themselves so happy in giving thanks to the God of all mercies, that the bent of their minds will always turn to this duty. It will become their perfect delight and joy to be employed in this part of devotion, which is by far the sweetest: for when an heart full of praise and gratitude pours out its adoration and thanks to its God and Saviour-Oh! how delightful must this devotion

votion be? and when grace heightens it and fires and inflames our hearts with the ardour of divine love---Oh! how heavenly must this devotion be? it is indeed the highest to which we can arise, while we are in the body, and it must certainly be the most pleasing and grateful, because it is the devotion of heaven itself. It is the very fervice of that innumerable company of faints and angels, who stand around the Redeemer's throne, and join their hearts and voices in heavenly harmony, giving thanks, and honour, and praife unto him that fitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever. And must not this be a most sweet and delightful duty, which makes up a great part of the enjoyment and happiness of the blessed in heaven? doubtless it must even here be exceedingly fweet to those persons, who hope to find themselves happy for ever in the practice of it. So that whoever has the true christian temper will be always giving thanks to his redeeming Lord, and will always in fo doing find fomething of that pure delight and joy, which the glorified Spirits in heaven find, while they fing the praises of their redeeming God. and Hiw Mo. who are to must ave win

O let us then lift up our hearts, and join our voices with theirs! may we catch fome of those heavenly strains, with which they incessantly celebrate Jesus their most adorable Redeemer. And if we can catch some of their fire, we shall

shall then feel what kind of joy it is to be truly and sincerely thankful to our blessed Lord. O may the spirit of grace elevate and exalt our affections, and raise them to that high pitch of thanksgiving, which may endear the duty to us, and make us in love with it so long as we live. God grant he may, that my application may come with more power to your hearts, and I shall address it to two different forts of persons. And

First, There may perhaps be some among you, who allow thankfgiving to be a pleafant duty, but yet you find in yourfelves no disposition to practice it. After what has been faid of the Redeemer's love to men, Oit is a cutting reflection to hear, that any of you should be in this cold dead state. Would to God there was not one man upon earth, much less any one in this place, fo infenfible of our Lord's mercy! but if fuch there be, the holy Spirit calls upon them in the text attentively to view what Christ has done for his people. The bleffings of his redemption are fufficient, not only to awake them that are afleep, but also to raise up the dead in fin: for confider, he redeemed them from those enemies who had them in vile subjection and bondage. They were fold in fin, in flavery to their own natural lufts and appetites--captives to fatan, who treated them cruelly, put-

ting them upon those miserable labours, wherein they could work out nothing but their own damnation---and fin and fatan had delivered them over to it, putting them in the power of death, temporal and eternal. Such was their wretched condition. And do you believe it, or not? if you do not, you oppose God, and his holy word, and every day's experience. If you do believe it, why are you not thankful for redemption? there can be but one reason, and that is, you have as yet no share in the mercies of the Redeemer. You know not your interest in him: for if you did, it would be as natural to offer him thankfgiving, as it is to breathe: and fo long as you withhold it from him, you are indeed in flavery and captivity, although you may not feel enough of your mifery to make you wish for redemption. Sin and fatan have fo deluded you, that you choose to continue flaves and captives to them, rather than to be fet at liberty by Jesus Christ. And having no defire to find an interest in his redemption, you have therefore no difposition to be thankful to him for it. This is a most dangerous state: and may the eternal Spirit open your eyes, and shew you the danger of it, that you may flee for your life to the God of all mercy and forgiveness, and may find abundant reason to be thankful for his redeeming love!

But I would hope there are very few of you thus indisposed to the practice of thanksgiving, and therefore I turn myfelf with joy to those, who are disposed and willing to be thankful. You have heard (my christian brethren) of the infinite love and mercy of your bleffed Saviour, and how by his free grace he redeemed you from the hand of the enemy, and gathered you out of all lands into his mystical body. When you were fold flaves to fin, captives to fatan, and given over to the power of death, then your God vouchfafed to become man to redeem you; he took your flesh, for the law required that the next relation, and he only, should be the Redeemer; he was made nearest to you in blood, that he might fulfil the character of a lawful Redeemer. The almighty God, the creator of all things, became your brother. O aftonishing condescension! and he paid down the full price for your redemption, and he paid it with joy, although he bled, and laid down his life for payment. But fuch was the infinite value and merit of his most precious blood, that it redeemed us from flavery, redeemed us from captivity, redeemed us from the power of death. It obtained for us the most full and plenteous redemption, even redemption from all the evils of fin in this world, and redemption to all the joys of the next world, for ever and ever. And finding yourfelves

yourselves thus redeemed from the present evils of fin, and entitled to the future joys of heaven, how can you forbear to give thanks to this most bleffed Redeemer? while you find his graces and comforts in your fouls, you cannot cease praising him: I hope your praifes will never cease, but it will be your joy and delight in time, as it is to be your happiness to eternity, to give honour and glory to the lamb who was flain, and has redeemed you unto God by his blood. It has been the subject and design of this discourse to bring you into this thankful frame and temper of mind. And if you are thankful, if you do but defire to be thankful, you will readily join your hearts with mine, in our requests to God, to make us more thankful, faying,

O most adorable God and Saviour, we beseech thee to send thy blessing upon what we have heard this day out of thy holy word. Endue it with thy power and essicacy, that it may reach our hearts, and may be the means of making us more thankful to thee. And give us grace, blessed Lord, to grow and improve in thankfulness, and let thy praises become more and more our delight. And to that end be pleased to let us know our interest in thy great redemption, that we all may now praise thee with joyful lips, and may join our thanksgiving with angels and archangels, and with all the company

pany of heaven, to laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of the glory of thy redemption: glory be to thee for it, O Jesu Christ, with the Father and the holy Spirit, to whom be equal honour, worship, and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

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They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses: and he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men: for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

THE general subject of this facred hymn is thanksgiving—the motives to induce us to be thanksful are taken from the mercies of redemption. And this redemption is here considered in several views, according to the several distresses from which we are redeemed, and each of these is used as a fresh motive to beighten our gratitude, and to inspire us with more praise to Jesus, our most adorable God and Redeemer.

In the last lecture I considered the three first verses, from which it appeared that the redeemed of the Lord were the persons here called upon to be thankful: they were redeemed from the hand hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the fouth, and while they had any fense of these great blessings, they would never be filent in his praifes, who had been to them an almighty deliverer. The holy Spirit, speaking of the fame persons in the same circumstances, offers them another motive for thankfulness, in the words which I have read. It is a clear and convincing argument, and I hope the inspirer of it will carry it with conviction to your hearts. He knew what was the most proper method to affect us, and he will certainly accompany his own methods with his own grace. And therefore every one of you may expect to reap that profit from this scripture, which the holy Spirit intended it should be the means of conveying to the faithful, if you put yourselves under his guidance and feek his bleffing, while Iam

First, Going through a paraphrase upon the words, and then

Secondly, Applying them as a motive to inspire you with thankfulness.

And first, The words relate to the redeemed, and describe the state, which they were in, before they partook of the blessings of redemption: before they were gathered together out of all lands, and admitted into the stock of the great shepherd and bishop of fouls, they wandered in

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the wilderness, where they were neither fed in green pastures, nor led forth beside the waters of comfort. Their spiritual state was so much like the natural condition of a dry barren wilderness, that the scriptures commonly describe it by this name. Ezekiel calls it the wilderness of the people, the defolate state of the heathen people. and not of the country--- and the prophet Isaiah foretells the happy change of this defolated state of the heathen people, when the holy Spirit should be poured upon them (xxxii. 15.) " until " the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, " and the wilderness be a fruitful field." When the abundant streams of his grace should descend upon the heathen world, then the wilderness and the folitary place should be glad, and the defart should rejoice and blossom as the rose --it should blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and finging. But before this bleffed change was made, we were all in a waste howling wilderness, where, the Pfalmist says, we wandered in a folitary way, for by fin we had loft the way to heaven. All flesh--the whole human nature. fays Moses, had corrupted his way upon earth--and this corruption foon discovers itself, and breaks out very early in life, for the prophet declares, that as foon as they are born they go aftray, and when they grow up, they have no power to return into the right way; but are like lost sheep, which can never of themselves find the

the way back again into the fold, after they have once strayed from it. And therefore, in the 53d, of Isaiah, our wretched condition is reprefented by this image---All we, not one of us excepted---all we like sheep have gone astray---we had wandered from the fold of the church, had strayed from the true shepherd, and got out of his pleasant and fruitful pastures into the desolate wilderness, where we had lost ourselves, and could find no way out of it, and no food in it: for while all the heathen world wandered in this folitary wilderness, they were hungry and thirsty, even to fuch a degree, that their foul fainted in them: for want of food their strength began to fail them, and they were even hard at death's door.

Now if you confider the propriety of this image only in its natural light, it is very striking, though it be very familiar. Suppose a person to be travelling through some desolate uninhabited country, like the desarts of Arabia, and unhappily to lose his way, and after wandering for some days, all his provision being gone, his spirits and his strength fail him, hunger and thirst begin to prey upon his vitals, and no hope of deliverance from any human means appearing, his soul really faints in him, and he gives himself up to despair. Is not this a scene of exquisite distress, and such as a person of the least tenderness cannot behold without being greatly

greatly moved with pity? for this miferable traveller cannot support himself much longer; his diffolution is drawing nigh; he already finks under the fatigues of mind and body, and famine will foon put an end to his wretched life. And if you should happen to be passing by this way, soon after the breath was gone out of his body, and should fee his ghastly appearance, how pale and emaciated, and frightful his dead corpfe looked, then your heart would melt over him, and you could not avoid fliedding one compaffionate tear. But how much more fenfibly would his death affect you, if you begun to be apprehensive of this same danger; if you had also lost your way, were without food, your spirits and strength failing, and fcarce any hopes left of your finding the right way again? When you thus made his case your own, your concern would be double, and you would be in the utmost distress for your own fafety, feeing before your eyes an unhappy fellow creature, who perished in the same circumstances.

Now if this case, which is only a temporal calamity, and to which death will put an end, would naturally move our pity, and excite our compassion, how much more should the same case in spirituals affect us? because here the calamity is endless, and death does not finish, but rather is an entrance and opening into eternal distress; so that if the case in common life moved

moved you greatly, then this in spiritual life should move you infinitely more. Call up then the foftest emotions of your tenderness, and compaffion, and mourn over that unhappy person, whose spiritual misery is painted out and reprefented by the loft, flarving, and dying traveller in the wilderness. You may see from what his body fuffers, how much the foul of the poor helpless sinner is to suffer, who has lost the way to heaven, and who wanders in fearch of it without any guide or direction, and after all his labour and pains to find it out, wearied and hungry, and fainting for thirst, he is forced to give over the fearch: his foul is ready to perifh, for want of the divine support, and of the streams of divine grace, which Christ and the holy Spirit only can give, and which are as necessary to the life of the foul, as meat and drink are to the life of the body. And if none be foon fent to this loft finner he dies, not only to this world, but he also dies from God, and from all the glories of the heavenly kingdom—he is eternally ruined and undone. Here then is an object a thousand times more miserable, than the poor traveller who perished in the wilderness. And can you behold, how it is possible for you (my brethren) to think of this infinitely more miferable object, and not to be infinitely more affected with it? doubtless every one among you, who can feel for others, and has any bowels of com-VOL. IV. passion

passion in him, must mourn over this unhappy man, who is just falling into torments, which know no intermission-no end. Oh! it is a dreadful case, beyond description distressful-God grant you may never know what it is, to be tormented for ever and ever in the flames of hell. And if you can thus pity another person in this diffrefs, O shut not up the bowels of your compassion against your own selves: for this is indeed your own case. You are this very lost ruined finner. Every one of you is, every fon of Adam is, in this wilderness-in it you have lost your way to heaven, and with the best of your natural abilities and reasoning powers cannot find it again: or if you could find it, yet you are not able to walk in it, because you are dying of hunger and thirst, whether you feel it or not: for you have no food from Chrift, who fays, I am the bread of life, to support your finful fouls, and therefore you must perish with hunger, and you have no grace from the holy Spirit, which is the water of life, and therefore you must perish with thirst. This is by nature the condition of every man who cometh into the world---and whoever thou art, who hast not seen thy self in this condition, thou art still in the waste and howling wilderness. Although the body may lodge in a palace, yet thy poor foul is in a defart: for if thou haft not yet found thy loft estate, thou hast not yet taken one step toward thy recovery. If thou hast

not feen and felt thy mifery-that thou hast lost thy way to heaven, and hast no merit to support thee, no grace to fanctify thee; if thou hast not feen this, Oh miserable man, thou art blind indeed. Thou art under the strongest delusion of sin, which shews its power over thee, by thus obscuring and darkening all the faculties of the foul. But if it should please God to open thine eyes, thou. wouldst, to thy amazement, see nothing around thee, but a waste barren wilderness, where thou now fanciest nature to be flourishing and fruitful. And may his good Spirit indeed enlighten your understandings, and shew you evidently your miserable state, that there may be raised in your hearts a strong cry for deliverance. And if you find any prayer, if it be but a defire, rifing in your minds, to accept of full and free redemption through Jesus Christ, hear how comfortably the holy Spirit exhorts you to apply to him in your distress, as it follows in the 6th verse, "Then they " cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he " delivered them out of their distresses." They were in the wilderness, had lost their way, had no food, were perishing, they could only cry unto the Lord; they had no help or hope left, but throwing themselves upon his mercy to pray him to interpose in their behalf. When misery brings us thus to know and feel our wretchedness, then our deliverance draweth nigh: for God is always more ready to help, than we are to pray

to him for help. And we cannot have a happier proof of his readiness to help, than in his fending us those troubles, which fend us to him, and which thereby bring us deliverance. And we have great reason to be thankful unto him, and to kiss the rod, whenever its chastisements dispose us to feek his face. " I will go and return . " to my place," fays the God of all mercy, in the prophet Hofea v. 15. " till they acknow-" ledge their offence, and feek my face, in their " affliction they will feek me early." How full is this passage of the most tender love and affection? you fee our God fends affliction, even to his enemies, with a defign to do them good; he fuffers them to fall into diffresses, from which the arm of flesh cannot deliver them, that they may be brought to acknowledge their offence, and to feek his face, who is almighty to deliver. And whenever outward fufferings produce this inward humiliation, then the design of them is answered; for then the mind is rightly disposed to look up to heaven, from whence only cometh help in time of need. And they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, they faw the mifery of their fallen state--they felt their guilt and wretchedness-they found no help in the wilderness of this world-and deeply abased and thoroughly humbled with the fense of their finfulness, they cried unto the Lord for help: and Jefus heard them. The God of love heard the first figh of their

their broken hearts, and before they cried unto him, he was at hand to fave. He is an almighty Saviour, whose love is as infinite as his powerhe is always ready to fave unto the uttermost. Whoever feek shall find his grace, either to shew him his guilt and mifery, or effectually to remove them. And if any of you are now fensible of guilt and mifery, make a trial of his redeeming love. Go to him with the fincere defires of your hearts to be pardoned and faved, and he will as soon cease to be God, as he will reject you. He will not cast you out. He shed his blood for you on the crofs-he loved you more than his own life--he even died to fave you, and he cannot cast you out. If you defire him to save you, you are faved: for they cried unto the Lord Jesus, and he delivered them out of their diffresses-they had nothing to offer him but prayers and intreaties-they could only cry for pardon and mercythis is all that they could do, and all that he wants: for fo foon as they cried for falvation, he faved them. His free grace led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. They could not help themselves -- they could only cry for help---and fo foon as they cried to him, his free-grace brought them a complete deliverance: for whereas they had loft their way, he brought them forth by the right way: his good spirit led them out of the wilderness unto him, who calls himself the way,

the truth, and the life, and in him they found an abiding city, whose builder and maker is God: this city is the church, which Christ hath purchased with his own blood, and whoever is admitted into it, and is a true living member of it, can want no manner of thing that is good: for Jesus Christ the Redeemer, the head of the church, has provided every thing that can make his members happy in time and to eternity. In time they have his good Spirit to enlighten them, and to shew them the way out of the wilderness, his merits to justify them, his grace to fanctify them, they are holy and happy, and in eternity they will enjoy these heavenly bleffings, to which they have already a fure right and title by the merits and free grace of Jesus Christ.

When such persons remember, what they formerly were in themselves, and what they are now made in him, how can they forbear to be thankful? how can the redeemed of the Lord be silent in the praises of the Redeemer; when they consider out of what a desolate wilderness he brought them, when they were lost and bewildered in it, were so hungry and thirsty, that their soul fainted in them, must not the very remembrance of these blessings inspire them with thankfulness? when nothing but death and endless ruin lay before them, he was pleased of his own free grace to hear the very first cry, which they sent up to him for deliverance, and

he came with all the tender mercies of our God to fave them. He turned the wilderness into a paradife---he put his revealed directions into their hands, and fent his good Spirit into their hearts to enlighten them, and to lead them into the right way-he gave them the bread of life to allay their hunger, and the waters of grace and comfort to quench their thirst--- and having thus bleffed them with all fpiritual bleffings, how can they-how is it possible they should be filent in his praises? while their hearts are full of gratitude to him, shall they not be telling with their mouths of the wonders which he hath done for their falvation? doubtless, they will be speaking of their most adorable Redeemer all the day long: for this is fo just a tribute of praise, it is so easy and pleafant a return; and besides, it is the only return we can make for his inestimable blessings; that this they will and must make him. And this is the grateful return which the holy Spirit calls upon us, in the next words, to make to our redeeming God--" O that men would therefore " praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his " wonderful works to the children of men." He has done wonders indeed---he never failed in the miraculous bleffings of his free grace, O that we may never fail in thankfulness for them. But certain it is, that we have all failed, and the best of us lament our failing the most: for thankful, as he deserves, none of us are. It is a rule

rule of common life, that thankfulness should be proportioned to the benefits received, and whoever does not act up to this rule is reckoned basely ungrateful among men. In religion the fame rule is just and equitable. But because Christ has been so infinitely merciful, that our thankfulness cannot be proportioned to the merits received, yet we are therefore more inexcufable, if we are not as grateful as it is possible for us to be: for to whom men give much, of them they always require the more; and to whom Christ has forgiven much, of them he requires the more love and praise. The more we receive, the greater is our debt, and to confider that we can never repay it, should most effectually stir us up to be thankful. Oh! how earnestly should we pray for, how incessantly should we be feeking the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to enable us to rise to higher degrees of gratitude. His merits will be still above our praifes, let us rife ever fo high; but let us not stop, until the heart be full of thankfulness, and every faculty of the mind and body be ready to give honour and glory to their redeeming God. " O that men would therefore praife " the Lord Jesus for his mercies, and declare " the wonders which he hath done for the fal-" vation of men: for he fatisfieth the longing " foul, and filleth the hungry foul with goodness." In these last words you see, how the prophet exalts

exalts the free grace of God in order to raife and exalt your gratitude: for these sinful lost travellers in the wilderness could do nothing to deliver themselves---they had tried every thing in their power, and could not fucceed-they were helplefs---faint---and miferable---they have only spirits enow left to cry unto God. And what haste does mercy make? for the moment they cry, Jesus was at hand to fave. The God of love came with all the bleffings of his redeeming grace, and poured them plentifully upon these poor finners, when he had made them fensible of their want of them, and they applied to him for relief. For he fatisfieth the longing foul---the longing foul is that which finds itself empty---which is convinced of its nothingness and wretchedness, and so soon as it can confess itself to be quite destitute of every faving grace, does indeed hunger and thirst after the graces of Jesus Christ, then he never fails to fatisfy this empty foul, and to fill this hungry foul with goodness. Such is Jesus the God of our falvation, and thus wonderful is he in his mercies to the children of men! O that they would therefore praise him for his infinite, his eternal mercies---and grant, O bleffed Jefus, that many persons, who hear me this day, may have reason to praise thee. Bring them by thy grace, O almighty Redeemer, out of the wilderness of fin and error, and let this scripture be netoma fulfilled fulfilled in every one of us, that we may join in giving thanks to thy holy name now and for every thanks to the holy name now and for

Thus much for the paraphrase upon the words; they contain a brief history of man's fall and misery, and of his restoration through Jesus Christ; which are described under these particulars.

First, The lost state of men by nature.

Secondly, they are brought to a right fense of it, and cry to the Lord Jesus for deliverance.

Thirdly, he hears them and delivers them out of all their diffresses. And

Fourthly, the tribute of thanks due to him for this great deliverance.

To each of these points I will speak, as briefly as I can, by way of spiritual use and application. And first the lost state of men by nature is here represented under the striking images of persons, who have loft their way in a barren wilderness, where they are ready to perish with fatigue and famine. Now, my brethren, let me put this plain question to you, and may God put it to your hearts-have you ever feen yourfelves in this loft state? If you have, give glory and thanks to Jesus your almighty Redeemer. If you have not, you are in the utmost danger, and yet you live fecure---you are still in your fins, with all the guilt of them about you, and deftruction. folfilled

struction lies before you-you are on the very precipice-in one moment you may fall into eternity---where nothing but endless torments can be your portion: and what a strong delusion of fin is it, that you, who fear and dread a little bodily pain in this life, should not be under the least apprehension about the endless pains of body and foul in the next life? what is able thus to infatuate you against your own reason and your fenses? you have not furely perfuaded yourselves, that the account which the Psalmist gives of your finful miferable state is not matter of fact? if you have fallen into this delution, hear what the word of God, and the voice of reason, and the fad experience of every day, loudly bear witness. The scripture is clear, that all we, every fon of Adam, all we like sheep have gone astray---we have strayed from the paradife of God into the wilderness of this finful world: and further the fcripture teaches, that they are all gone out of the way-all-not one excepted, " they are all gone out of the way, they are all-" together become abominable, there is also " none that doeth good, no not one." And the confequence of our wandering is thus described, -- " destruction and misery are in their ways, " and the way of peace have they not known." The fense and meaning of these passages you will not dispute, their authority you do not deny: and how then can you refift their evidence, fince CT)

the reason of mankind, Jews, Heathens, and Christians, confirms it, and every day's melancholy experience renders it more clear and felfevident? if you will not believe this cloud of witnesses, you must believe nothing: for you may as well doubt, whether there are any fuch beings as men, as whether they be fallen finful beings. The one is an object of fense, as much as the other. And therefore unless you have taken your rest in absolute scepticism, and are quite fettled upon the lees and dregs of infidelity, you must allow that mankind are finful and miserable. Sin is the parent of all their mifery: for it feparates them from God, who is the parent of all good. It feparates them in this world from his grace, and it will feparate them in the next world from his glory for ever and ever. And now (my brethren) being convinced of your loft flate and finful condition, what do you refolve to do in consequence of this conviction? will you go away from hence with this conviction upon your minds, and fin on as fecurely as you did before? God forbid. Your guilt would then be increased, your case would grow more desperate, you would then choose misery-even eternal mifery, with your eyes open. O what a dreadful infatuation would this be! may the Lord Jefus keep you from it, and may his heavenly grace fecond my intreaties, that you may now-this very moment, fee your loft state by nature, and cry

cry out unto him in the anguish of your fouls for his grace! and if it be but a deep figh from the heart, or a short prayer, Lord Jesus fave, or elsewe perish-this the God of love will hear, and answer. For it follows in the next words of the text, " when they cried unto the Lord in their " trouble, then he delivered them out of their " diffreffes." They could do no more to deliver themselves, than you can do; they could only cry to him in prayer to fave them, and according to the greatness of his mercies he freely gave them full redemption. This is the established method of his proceeding. So foon as he fent his grace to flew them their wretchedness, and to dispose them to cry to him for deliverance, he was ready and able to fave them to the uttermost; and he is now as ready and as able to deal thus graciously with you. If you cry unto him for help, he will fave. How fweetly does he invite, how powerfully does he perfuade you now to cry aloud for his redeeming grace. " Call upon me, fays he, in the day of trouble, " fo will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me." Therefore now call upon him, let the fense of your guilt and mifery now make you earnest and importunate in your requests-call upon him in the day of trouble, and what an encouragement does he give you to persevere-So I will hear thee---I fhed my blood for thy guilt, and my grace is almighty to remove thy mifery-only feek

feek them in prayer and I will hear and answer, and thou shalt praise me—thou shalt have reason to praise me for the abundant mercies of my free and full redemption. O that men would therefore praise the Lord Jesus, &c.

I have been very short upon the three last particulars in the text, viz. the fense which these finners had of their mifery, their crying for deliverance, and the tribute of thanks due to Christ for delivering them, because I shall have frequent occasion to speak upon them in the following parts of the Pfalm. But enough I hope has been faid to lay open this most sweet and comfortable portion of scripture, and to warm your hearts with the confideration of it. You fee that the mercies of our God are above our mifery. Though by nature we wander like sheep in the barren wilderness of this world, yet we have a most tender shepherd, who is always feeking to bring us back into the fruitful pastures of his church. Though in this wilderness we can find no abiding city, yet within the fold and pale of his church, we may find rest unto our fouls. Though we have no spiritual fupport in ourselves, yet his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, and when his good Spirit applies the merits of them to our hearts, then we have true spiritual life abiding in us. Though our fouls fainted within us, while we wandered in the wilderness, yet Jesus the

the God of all consolation will refresh the fainting soul with his reviving grace, and will supply it with every manner of thing that is good through the ages of eternity. So that he is more merciful than we are miserable—and in this respect his mercies are over all his works, for that he only waits until we have seen our misery, and are humbled enough to cry to him for relief, and then he shews he is at hand, a God to save. O that you may all this day experience his almighty power, and have fresh proof of his redeeming love—and every one of you who desires it, will readily join with me in requesting his blessing on what you have now heard.

O most mighty God and Saviour, we acknowledge and confess our lost estate by nature: for all men have wandered in the wilderness out of the way, and have found no abiding city---they could find no way out of the wildernefs--no place to rest, and no food to support them in it, hungry and thirsty their fouls fainted in them---But so soon as the sense of their misery disposed them to cry to thee, bleffed Jesus, thou wast ready to deliver them out of all their diffresses. Now almighty Lord deliver us, and extend the fame mercies to this whole congregation---and let not one perfon among them leave this place, without being first convinced of his own misery, and then of thy all-fufficiency to redeem him from it. Bring what has been faid upon thefe

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truths home to all our hearts, and carry it with thy divine power and efficacy to our confciences, that we may now cry to thee with one voice—Lord Jesus save, or else we perish. Hear us thou God of Love, and be unto us an almighty Saviour, that we may bless thee with grateful hearts, for having brought us up this day out of the wilderness of the world, here to the house of the Lord—where we found reason to be thankful as long as we live, and to declare the wonders which thou hast done for our salvation. Grant this, O most adorable Jesus, to the glory of God the Father, and by the influence of the holy Spirit, upon all our hearts, now and for ever. Amen and Amen.

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Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God, and condemned the counsel of the most high: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour, they fell down and there was none to help; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses; he brought them out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! for he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

THE holy Spirit fets before us in these words a second image of our misery by nature. He has called upon the redeemed of the Lord to be thankful to Jesus the God of their redemption, and in order to exalt and raise their thankfulness the more, he gives them four images, in which the misery of sallen man is placed in different views. In the first he is represented as lost in a wilderness, where after much wandering and weariness, fainting with hunger and thirst, he is Vol. IV.

just ready to perish. But finding no help upon earth, and being brought to a deep fense of his distress, he cries unto the Lord in his trouble. and Jefus was at hand to fave: for fo foon as the finner was disposed to accept, the Saviour was willing to bestow, free and full redemption. This was the subject of the last lecture. We have in the words before us a fecond image of man's fallen condition, in which the diffresses of it are greatly heightened, and if I were able to paint the exquisite misery of it, so that you might fee it in a strong light, it could not fail of having a great influence upon every unconverted person. I will therefore endeavour to set it before your eyes in as striking colours, as I am able, and I hope the fame good Spirit who infpired this passage will be pleased to accompany us this day in the confideration of it, and to fupply the imperfections of my difcourse by his divine grace in your hearts. O eternal Spirit now preside over us, and shew thyself to be a God, by applying the doctrine with power and energy to every one of our consciences, while Iam

First, Laying open the sense and meaning of the words, and

Secondly, Confidering their spiritual use and application.

It must be remembered, that the words belong to the redeemed of the Lord-they are the persons

persons called upon to be thankful--and the motives to excite their thankfulness are taken from a review of their miferies and diffresses. before they obtained redemption: and thefe miferies and diffresses were of so many various kinds, and fo very numerous, that they could not be represented to the life in one picture. In order to fet them before our eyes in full proportion, it was necessary to draw them in different fcenes: and therefore the holy Spirit has given us in these four paintings a perfect description of man's finful and miferable condition by nature! in the first he is represented as having lost the way to heaven, and wandering in a wilderness, weary with fatigue, faint with famineready to perish---in the second, his distress is heightened, for he falls into a pit of darkness, and the shadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him into close confinement, binding him with the heavy chains of affliction and iron. The scripture and every day's experience confirm this description, for the first words, such as lit in darkness, are true of every fon of Adam in his natural state. Sin cut off all communication between God and us, and thereby rendered us quite ignorant and blind in all spiritual knowledge: for if the eye of the mind have no light from the eternal fun of righteoufness, it is in the fame state with the eye of the body, if it have no light from the created fun in the hea-Infgir

vens--- fo that all the spiritual world was covered with gross darkness and blindness, until the light of life arose: for thus faith the Lord God, speak-" ing of Christ, I have given thee for a light " to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes--to " bring out the prisoners from the prison, and " them that fit in darkness out of the prison-" house." Now it is certain, that the Gentiles, to whom Christ was given for a light, were not literally blind-they had good eyes, and could fee outward objects clear enough-but the eye of the foul was entirely blind, infomuch that Christ came down from heaven miraculously to open it. And he fent out his apostles for the fame purpose, and when he called Paul to the apostleship, he gave him his commission in these words, " I fend thee now unto the Gentiles, to " open their eyes, and to turn them from dark-" ness to light." You cannot suppose, that all the Gentiles were blind, to whom St. Paul was fent, and yet they had eyes which were not open, until the gospel enlightened them, and these were the eyes of the mind: for when the Gentiles were turned from darkness to light, then was fulfilled that which is written by the prophet Isaiah, " the eyes of the blind shall see " out of obscurity, and out of darkness"-the " fun of righteoufness arose upon their obscurity and darkness, and so enlightened the eyes of the spiritually blind, that they clearly discovered the right

right way to heaven. And the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, were by nature in this blind state; Zacharias in the gospel confesses it, "The day-" fpring, (i. e. Christ,) from on high hath visited " us, to give light to them that fit in darkness " and the shadow of death" --- all mankind without Christ, Jews and Gentiles, not only sit in darkness, but also in the shadow of death. Such is the blind and miferable condition of finners! Sin has fubjected them to temporal and to eternal death; but because the death of the soul, when it perishes eternally from God is not an object of fense, the holy Spirit was therefore pleafed to give us a shadow of it, by the death of the body, when it perishes to this world. And both these kinds of death entered into the world by fin; and what the body fuffers by dying to this world, is indeed but a shadow of what the foul fuffers when it dies from God in the next world. And yet it is a very just and expressive shadow: for as the body, when it dies, has no longer any fense or perception of the outward objects of this life, but totally perishes from the light and spirit of the animal world, and from all the joys and comforts which they administer, so the soul, when it dies from God, has no longer any fense or perception of the inward objects of its life, but totally perishes from the eternal light and spirit of the heavenly world, and from all the joys and comforts which they

they administer. Thus bodily death is a shadow of spiritual-and temporal of eternal. I might trace the likeness in more particulars, but this may fuffice to explain what the Pfalmist means, by the shadow of death. He supposes the mortality of the body to be a shadow of the sad estate into which fin brought the foul. All mankind is subject to this mortality, which is but the shadow of death, for in the death of the body we have a mournful picture of the more miserable death of the foul, which is the substance of death: this is the reality and substance of what the other is but a shadow. Oh what a distressful scene then is this! here is nothing but darkness and the shadow of death--a body mortal and perishing, and while it lives is in bondage and the fear of death, terrified at the very approach of the shadow, and how much more in dread of the fubstance. And yet this distress is still heightened, for these poor sufferers are fo chained down, that they cannot escape from the power of their enemies; they cannot stir one step out of this darkness and shadow of death; because they are fast bound in affliction and iron. Sin brought us into this darkness and shadow of death, and then chained us down to these miseries. The scripture frequently speaks of the bonds of fin, and describes man in his fallen state to be as much a flave to fin, as if he was really chained down. And indeed a chain

of the hardest iron, or of the toughest steel, is more easily broken, than a long habit of sin: for the foul is then fettered and bound, as much as if the man was chained to the gallies, and yet he endures it willingly, although no galley flave is put to harder fervice, or has a more cruel and inexorable tyrant over him. Ought not this woman, fays Christ, whom fatan hath bound. to these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond? And fatan hath bound the whole human race, as well as this woman: for of whom a man is overcome, of the fame is he brought into bondage; and he overcame us all by fin, and then bound us with the strong chains of it, which no human power can loofe. He only who overcame fatan, is able to release his prisoners, And the Pfalmist in the 68th Pfalm, enumerating fome of our Lord's great deliverances, fays in the 6th verse, "he bringeth out those which " are bound with chains," and the prophet Isaiah declares, "that he should open the prison " to them that were bound." These scriptures are to be spiritually applied: for Christ never released any prisoners by breaking open the prifon doors, and fnapping their bonds afunder. We meet with nothing of this kind in his life. But we read frequently of his delivering men from the bonds of their fins, and freeing them from fatan and death. From whence it follows, that unless our great Redeemer had come to break

break off our chains, we must have laid bound in affliction and iron for this life, and then have been reserved in everlasting chains under darkness in the next.

This is a true image and portraiture of every fon of Adam. While he remains in his natural fallen state he is in darkness, and the shadow of death, fast bound in misery and iron. And how terrible is this fituation---to live in darkness without one ray of divine light and comfort---to be under the difmal gloom and shadow of death, and to be bound down to this mifery by fatan, with his strongest fetters and chains--certainly this is a scene of deep distress? and the view of it should lead us to enquire, how the gracious Author of our being should suffer mankind to become subject to it: for he cannot be the cause of our mifery; fo that it must have been some great and heinous offence, by which we brought ourselves into these distresses. And let the Pfalmist relate the reason-" they sat in darkness " and in the shadow of death, being bound in " affliction and iron, because they rebelled " against the words of God." " Because they " rebelled." This was the grand rebellion for which the head of the family was attainted, and his attainder corrupted the blood of all his children. Our first parents took up arms against the fupreme majesty of heaven, and vainly imagined that they could find knowledge and happiness,

piness, contrary to his declared will, and in opposition to his almighty power; and they carried this vain imagination into act: they lifted themselves under the devil's banner, and fet themfelves in battle array against God, defying his threatnings and his vengeance. In comparison of this great rebellion, all others have been only weak plots and conspiracies: for this was the highest crime man could commit: because to whom much is given, it is just and equitable of them to require the more. And God had given to Adam greater gifts and abilities, with innocence to enable him to use them aright, than to any of his descendants, and had with the most tender affection counselled him against that very temptation, by which he was most liable to be feduced--therefore when he rebelled against God, and contemned the counfel of the most high, it was the most horrid rebellion that a creature could commit against its Creator. And it was far from cruelty in God, it was an act of justice without feverity, to fuffer him to fall into the pit, which he had dug for himself, and there to be taken by the enemy, and committed a prisoner to darkness and the shadow of death, and to be fast bound with mifery and iron. But it may be enquired, why are we fubject to his mifery? Because we could not but be involved in his guilt. His treason corrupted his blood, and being corrupt in the fountain, it could

not but be corrupt in the streams, which issue from it. We fee a standing instance of this in the book of nature; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And we have a clear evidence of it in the book of God; which declares, that coming from a corrupt stock, we are altogether corrupt and abominable, being by nature children of wrath. And we have incontestible proof from the equity of our own laws, which not only punish treason with the loss of life in the traitor himself, but also with the loss of honours and estate in his descendants to the latest posterity. Now to deny that we are corrupt by nature against these evident proofs, is a full demonstration of our corruption. And he is fallen the lowest, who thinks he is not fallen at all; for he who lives and acts as if he was not a fallen creature, must be farthest from recovery, and confequently must be most miserable: it is still rebellion to think to be happy in opposition to the revealed will of God; and every infidel, because he attempts this, is a rebel; he is a traitor convict; and every infidel fociety is an army of rebels united under the banner of their chief; who tempts, deludes, infatuates them, and hurries them on, fometimes even against conviction, until the long fuffering of God be wearied out with their rebellions, and he fuffer them to fall into the hands of the enemy, who binds them with everlafting chains under darknefs. O may the

the God of mercy open their eyes, before they perish! bleffed Jesus shew them their guilt, and humble them under the fense of it; that finding their mifery they may fly to thee for fuccour: for this is the usual method by which our Lord reclaims the unconverted and the infidel, as it follows in the Pfalm; "Therefore he brought " down their hearts with labour, they fell down " and there was none to help." He brought down their rebellious hearts by labour, he visited them with outward afflictions, under the weight of which they fell down, and there was none to help; they could not find any help upon earth; all worldly comforters failed them, and then they began to fee their wretched condition. Their outward mifery made them feel their inward. They found themselves in darkness, which no ray of fcience, nor the brightest beams of human learning, were able to difpel. They found themselves in the shadow of death, from the terrors of which, all the moral and civil virtues put together could not deliver them. They found themselves fast bound in misery and iron, and all the powers in the earth could not break their chains. Finding their diffrefs, and feeing no creature able to help, they were thereby difposed to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. And indeed, their proud hearts were fo thoroughly brought down and abased, that they were led to cry unto the Lord in their trouble,

trouble, and he faved them out of their distresses, The Pfalmist in the 13th verse makes this the happy effect of their affliction; it disposed them to feek God's favour, and he is always found of them who feek him. So foon as they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he was at hand to fave them from their diffresses. The almighty Saviour came and brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in funder. And thus he gave them complete redemption. Darkness fled at the approach of the eternal light---and the shadow of death was turned into the light of life at the appearance of the living God-and the bonds brake in funder, when Christ came and proclaimed liberty to them that were bound; and being thus enlightened and fet free from the bonds of fin and fatan, and delivered from the shadow of death, after they have obtained fo free and full a redemption, how can they be filent in the Redeemer's praise? they then have a lively sense of his redeeming love in their hearts, and it would be acting against their own sense and feeling, if they made him no return of gratitude. It would be unnatural. Nay it is indeed impossible for men to partake of the blessings of redemption, and not to be thankful to their Redeemer. "O that men would therefore " praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare " the wonders which he hath done for the fal-" vation

vation of men." Wonders indeed! for he brought them from darkness to light, from the shadow of death to the life eternal, and from the bonds of mifery to a crown of immortality. And shall they not praise him for these wonders? shall they not speak with their tongues what their hearts feel? doubtless they will be telling of his falvation all the day long: and left they should ever forget it, the Psalmist once more reminds them of their great deliverance: for he hath broken the gates of brafs, fays he, and cut the bars of iron in funder. Remember from whence ye were redeemed and be thankful--were ye not in a prison, that was fortified with gates of brass, and bars of iron, and were ye not chained down in the most dark and loathsome dungeon of this prison? do you not recollect what horror you were in, when you found yourselves in this distress, and had none upon earth to help you? and yet you no fooner cried to Jesus for help, than he heard your cries and came: he brake open the gates of brafs, and fnapped the bars of iron in funder; your chains fell off; and he brought you out of the prisonhouse, and set you at liberty. And certainly you do not want to be perfuaded to be thankful for fuch a deliverance? or to be grateful to fuch a deliverer? your praifes should flow with as much eafe and as naturally as your breath. God grant the one may endure as long as the other.

other, fo that of his praises there may be no brought the a tren darkness to light, frombins

I have now finished the paraphrase upon the words, and I come 2dly, to the spiritual wfe and application of them. The doctrine which they contain is this. Every fon of Adam in his natural state before he is redeemed is in darknefs, and the fhadow of death, and is fast bound with the chains of fin and mifery, and there is no help for him upon earth--the almighty God and Saviour alone is able to deliver him. This is the doctrine which I have supported from other passages of scripture, and from experience. And now, my brethren, let us examine ourfelves upon it, and try to make it ufeful and profitable to our fouls. The proper steps to this end feem to me, first, to believe the doctrine---zdly, to defire to experience the truth of it, and adly, to find the happy experience of it in our fouls, and then we shall have reason indeed to be thanksetus for help, than he heard your cries and

And first, The belief of the doctrine is the chief point in the christian religion! For we must be made fensible of our fallen state by nature, before we can think of its being renewed by grace. The fick only want a physician. The finner only wants a Saviour; and therefore we can have no motive to apply to him for his falvation, until we find ourselves ruined and undone by fin. So that this must be first and above other.

all

all things fettled in our minds. The doctrine of our redemption stands upon our belief of the fall; and if man in his fallen state was not in darkness, then we want no Saviour to enlighten us: if he was not in the shadow of death, then we want no Saviour to deliver us from death: if he was not fast bound with chains by fin, and fatan, and death, then we want no Saviour to break our bonds afunder. We must first believe ourfelves to be in these distresses, before we can feek for redemption. And therefore, my brethren, do you indeed believe, that you are in your fallen state, in the distresses here described by the Pfalmift, or do you not believe it? do you fee no darkness in the human mind? do you know none who live in the fear of death? and were you never tied to fome favourite bosom fin, which you found it harder to break off, than it could be to break the strongest chains of iron? certainly you must have remarked fomething of this kind; and if you have, how can you account for it, othewife than upon the Psalmist's principles? if mankind did not lofe the divine light and life by fin, how came all this spiritual darkness into their minds? if they did not lose the love and favour of God by fin, how came they to be fubject to death, and to live all their fives in fear of it? if they have not contracted a proneness to evil, how happens it to be so difficult to break the bonds of fin? no fatisfactory

account can be given of these things, but what is taken from the scripture history of the fall. and therefore why should you not believe the fcripture history? if you confult the infidels, they have nothing to offer upon these points. their advocates are filent. The heathens have written much, and reasoned more upon the subject, but without fuccess. Their best writers own, that they were not able to clear it up. But upon the christian plan the difficulties vanish at once. The scripture account is rational and confiftent. And why then, my brethren, do you not believe it? you have the word of God and the voice of reason, and melancholy experience attesting the depravity and corruption of mankind. You cannot deny, but that they are depraved and corrupt. This is a felf-evident truth. And what remedy is there for it? can God look upon fuch finful polluted creatures with approbation? No. He cannot. The infinite purity of his nature will not fuffer it. And he will not. He has declared, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and he who has once finned can never make himself holy, and confequently he can never fee the Lord---unless there be a Redeemer, who has holiness to give: for God's purity, and fin's impurity fet God and the finner at an infinite distance. And how shall he ever approach to God, unless there be a Redeemer, who has infinite righteoufness to impute

to the finner, and thereby enable him to draw near to God; here is our only remedy. The Redeemer, and he alone, is able to repair all the evil effects of fin. Our fouls must have remained for ever in darkness, unless the divine rays of the fun of righteousness had enlightened them. Our bodies would have lived here in the shadow of death, unless the Redeemer had brought life and immortality to light. And both body and foul would have been bound with the chains of fin here and for ever, unless our almighty deliverer had fet us at liberty. O let us receive him then for our Redeemer and our God? Finding and feeling our mifery and diffress without him, let there be raifed in the heart a strong cry for his falvation. Let us imitate them in the text, who cried unto the Lord in their trouble. And this defire to experience his power to redeem us was the fecond head of application.

If you believe what has been faid of your fallen ftate, and yet have no defire to be redeemed from it, how do you quiet your confciences as to this abfurd conduct? you do believe, that man is by nature finful and miferable, and yet you have no defire to be redeemed from fin and mifery, how inconfiftent and contradictory is this proceeding? do you chuse then to be in darkness rather than in light? is death preferable to life, or bonds to liberty? Oh miserable deluded Vol. IV.

man, whom fin thus infatuates! whoever thou art, thou art felf-condemned: because thou hast seen thyself fallen, and yet hast no desire to be raised up. By what arguments, what intreaties, shall I prevail with thee? how shall I touch thy heart, and win thy affections, to make thee defire, what thou knowest already thou must desire, before thou canst be happy? blessed Jesus! this is a work above my power. Take it Lord into thine own hand, and fend thine almighty grace into the hearts of all my hearers who are in this dreadful fituation, that they may be difposed to feek pardon and peace of thee with strong crying and tears, until thou fave them from their distresses. Our Redeemer is a God of love: he cannot reject any person, who seeks for his redemption; feek therefore, and ye shall find. Defire, and your defires shall be granted: for they cried unto the Lord Jesus in their trouble--they only cried unto him, and he faved them out of their distresses. So will he fave you, if you cry unto him for falvation. This is your encouragement, defire and pray, until you happily experience his redeeming grace, which is the third and last point I purposed to consider. The word experience in these days of blasphemy and reproach conveys an odd idea to fome perfons, and I know that they cannot separate it from enthufiasm: but I have remarked, that they who ridicule the word, are entire strangers to the thing:

for

for we mean nothing more by experience, than the knowledge of what God has done for our fouls, which may be as certainly perceived, as any external object can be; for can faith be given, and the heart be changed, and all its affections altered; is it possible this should be done, and yet the man who fuffers this great and total change should not know it? can he be brought out of darkness into light, and not be fensible of it? can he be delivered from the fear of death, and not find that his fears are gone? can his bonds and chains be broken off, and shall he not feel, that he is at liberty? furely he must--he must know and feel it. He must have as clear an idea of it, as a poor condemned prifoner would have of liberty, if he was brought out of the dark dungeon, and his chains and fetters knocked off. If you allow him to experience his deliverance, then you cannot deny the fame experience to the redeemed of the Lord, whom he has brought out of darkness, and whose chains he has broken afunder. For doubtlefs the foul may have its experience as well as the body, and the knowledge will be as certain in one case as in the other. And it highly concerns all formal nominal christians, and I call upon them, to observe this. And I would enquire of them, how they know that they have been redeemed, if they have had no experience

of redemption? will they pretend that they were born in a christian country, and were baptised, and have lived ever fince in the communion of fome reformed church: be it fo. But all this entitles them no more to redemption than if they had been born among the heathens or mahometans: for a man born in England wants converfion as much as one born in Turkey. The fame change of heart is necessary for both; and it is certain, being baptifed does not change the heart, because as children grow up we see the feeds of vice fprouting up apace, and nothing can check them but being baptifed with the holy Ghost, of which water baptism was the instituted emblem and figure: and whoever is baptifed with the holy Ghoft, must as certainly experience the change it makes in him, as he can fee or feel any outward object. He was before in darkness, now he is in light---before he was afraid of death, now his fears are gone---before he was chained down in a loathfome prison, now he is at liberty. How can this be, and the man not know it? is it possible to open the eyes of a blind man, and he not know it? can he be restored to fight, and not see it? certainly you cannot believe any thing fo abfurd, and yet you do believe a greater abfurdity, if you think yourselves to be the redeemed of the Lord, and yet have experienced nothing of his redeeming

power. Without this experience you are only nominal christians, and I befeech you (my brethren) not to rest in the mere name of christianity. If you have no knowledge of what Christ has done in your fouls, you are only christians in profession--you are christians without any fense or feeling christianity, insensible christianswhat mere nothings are these in religion? you fancy you live to Christ, and yet you have no perception of this life, what can be more abfurd? therefore be not any longer content with the mere shadow of christianity, nor think you have redemption, because you keep some of its outward fervices. These are well, but something more is necessary. God is to do the great work in your fouls. It is all his. You can do nothing to it. You have only to defire and pray for his redemption. And his grace, which difpofes you to defire and pray, will also do all the rest: for it is he, who worketh in you, both to will and to do-therefore cry unto him, until he work in you both to will and to do. If you cry, he will hear and answer-he will bring you from darkness to light, from the shadow of death to life eternal, and from the bonds of fin and fatan into the perfect liberty of the fons of God. And may the bleffed Jefus give you the experience of these great changes, that you may find him almighty to perfect your redemption,

tion, and then you will be thankful. Senfible of your own mifery by nature, and of the bleffings of his free grace, you will not be filent in your Redeemer's praife. Your grateful hearts will overflow with expressions of thankfulness, and you will live entirely to him, who now liveth in you. And so many as are in this happy state, who have tasted how good and gracious our Redeemer is, will now draw near unto him, and send up their earnest request to him for his blessing upon what you have heard. And

We befeech thee, O most adorable God and Saviour, to make this discourse useful and profitable to our fouls. We confess that we were by nature in darkness and in the shadow of death, and were fast bound with the chains of misery and fin. Thus low were we fallen, and there was none to help. But as foon as we cried unto thee, bleffed Jesus, thou wast at hand to save and didft deliver us from all our diftreffes. We praise and glorify thee for thy free and full redemption. And grant, O Lord, to this whole congregation the fame happy experience. Send thy good Spirit into all their hearts, and fo intirely change them from fin to righteoufness, that they finding thee to be also their Redeemer and their God, may join with us in praising thee for thy goodness, and in declaring the wonders which

which thou hast done for our falvation. O thou God of love let no one leave this place without a blessing: but hear and answer according to the riches of thy mercy to the glory of the Father and of the eternal Spirit, three persons of equal power, majesty, and dominion, to whom be ascribed equal honour and worship, now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON V.

PSALM CVII. 17--23.

Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities are afflicted: their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

THE subject of this Psalm is thanksgiving; the motives by which the holy Spirit tries to stir us up to be thankful are taken from redemption; which is the greatest mercy God has bestowed upon mankind, and therefore it justly demands the greatest than vulness. But because the all-wise Inspirer of this divine hymn knew the abominable corruption of our hearts, and that we were by nature unholy and unthankful, he has therefore used several arguments to convince us. He is earnest and importunate with us. He calls aloud to us again and again, solicits, presses us, to open our eyes, and to behold the wonders which

which God hath done for our redemption. And to give an edge to these repeated intreaties, and to make them pierce the deeper, he has adorned them with the ornaments of language, and the graces of fentiment. The very composition has every thing beautiful and fublime, that can recommend it to our efteem; and he who knows the heart, and what is most likely to make an impression upon it, has still farther heightened the fubject by four paintings from nature, which he has drawn in the most lively and striking colours. The defign of each of these pieces is to represent our fallen state in the most affecting point of view, that feeing and feeling the exquifite distress of it, we may be induced to cry unto the Lord Jesus for deliverance; who never shutteth out the cry of the poor destitute, but hears and comes with all the hafte that almighty love can make, to deliver and to fave. The fubject of the first painting is laid in a wilderness: fallen man is like a traveller, loft and bewildered in a defert, weary and faint, and ready to perish with famine. In the second piece his distress increases, for he falls into a pit of darkness and the shadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him in chains, binding him with mifery and iron. In the third, which we are going to view at prefent, you will fee him laying in a scene of still greater distress. Behold him here quite worn down with fickness. See

how pale and feeble and emaciated he looks --- his ftrength gone--his appetite lost--his breath failing-he draws near to the gates of death. This is the affecting fcene on which we are now to fix our eyes, And I hope you will attend to the Pfalmist's account of the causes and symptoms of our diforders, of the proper remedy, and of the means to avoid difeases for the future. I know you all value health: nothing is dearer to you: for without it life itself is a burden; therefore hear what the Pfalmist has to offer upon these points, and let this awaken your closest attention, that he does not borrow his rules from books, or from the experience of the ablest phyficians, but he received them from the author of our being. The all-wife God revealed them to him, and through him to us, and may he guide our hearts, that we may receive by his grace all that profit from this scripture, which he intended it should be the means of administering to the faithful. May his good Spirit fanctify our hearts, while we are viewing the three chief parts of this highly finished painting.

First, The distress of the fick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great physician. And, and ambage tenter's all mill etter band and

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

As to the first particular, the cause of their fickness is thus described. " Foolish men by a " course of fin, and wickedness are afflicted and worl " brought

" brought low." Sin was the fruitful parent of all their diforders; and though they knew it, though they faw daily fad experience of it, yet they were fuch fools as still to fin on, and to perfevere obstinately at the expence of their own health and life. What a strong delusion was this? they found themselves weakened and enfeebled, quite worn down with labouring in the ways of fin, and yet they were fo infatuated, as to perfift. Might not the Pfalmist with good reason call such men sools? what could be greater folly than to continue in an habit of finning, until it had brought them fo low, " that their foul ab-" horred all manner of meat, and they drew " nigh to the gates of death?" A course of fin was the cause of their disorder, and in these words the Pfalmist gives us the dangerous symptoms of it: food is necessary to our being: the defire of it is a natural appetite, but when nature lofes the defire for that which is necessary to its very being, it must be then greatly disordered. The stomach must have been much injured, and the organs dangeroufly impaired, indeed the whole body must be in a very bad habit, before all appetite could be loft. But how much more dangerous are the fymptoms, when nature does not only cease to desire, but cannot even bear the most innocent food? when the stomach is become fo weak and tender, that it cannot digest the lightest meat, the case is then growing defperate,

perate, and there feems to be no hopes left, when it comes to the last stage here described, viz. to loath and abhor all manner of meat. The stomach turns at the fight of it. And the man has this loathing and abhorrence of all manner of meat; what he most loved, and had the best appetite for, is now become fo very offenfive, that at the smell of it he grows sick, and faints away. Nature cannot support itself long under this diforder. If this lofs of appetite, and loathing even the fmell of the most simple food continue, it must wear the patient out: indeed it is not always a mortal diftemper; there may be an entire loathing of food, and even fainting away at the fmell of it, and the patient may fometimes recover. But in the present case, the diffemper had continued fo long, and was grown so inveterate that there were no hopes, for they draw nigh, the Pfalmist says, to the gates of death, these gates of brass, and bars of iron, with which death locks up his prisoners in the grave; and you may judge how great must be the strength of these gates and bars, since only one person was ever able to break through them, and if he had not been more than man, he could never have broken these gates of brass, nor cut these bars of iron in funder.

This is the striking image in the text, and in order to see it in the most affecting point of view, you should visit a person in this distress. Go to his

his fick bed and behold him in this languishing condition, laying weak and feeble, and wearing away apace through loss of appetite: you see all the organs of the body for want of natural fupplies begin to be unable to perform their proper offices. And as the bodily strength decays, the faculties of the mind also are impaired. His memory is short. He is scarce able to distinguish one object from another. If you continue for fome time by his bedfide, and examine all the fymptoms of his diforder, it must greatly move your compassion to see him in such pain and mifery. You cannot but feel tenderly for him, and the more, if you recollect, that this case may soon be your own. And if you thus bring it home and apply it to yourselves, it may be natural to give a vent to your pity, and to fhed one compaffionate tear over your distressed fellow creature. But if the person who is in this disorder should happen to be dear to you, a relation, a friend, as near as the wife of your bosom, you could not behold them in these agonies without fuffering along with them. And I ask every tender humane person among you, whether he does not think forrow would become him on fuch an occasion? You fee how naturally tears flow at the fight of a painted fcene in a deep tragedy: and what then would the world fay of an hufband, who could fee his wife languishing under the loss of appetite, and yet stand by

by her unconcerned, even after the physician had pronounced her case desperate. A man of the least compassion would be greatly affected, and I appeal to every one of you, whether you would not approve of his tender concern for so dear and intimate a relation. I know you would think yourselves inhuman and brutish, if you felt no sentiments of pity for the sufferings of your bosom friend. And

What can be dearer to you, than your own fouls? have pity therefore upon yourselves: for you are the men. This is your own picture, painted from nature, and by the eternal Spirit of God. You are these very persons, labouring under this loss of appetite. Every one of you by the fall is in this dreadful case; O therefore turn your compassion upon yourselves. And if the fight of the bodily difease in others made you fuffer, let your fuffering be doubled at the fight of your own inward difeafe. Can you mourn over these outward maladies, and can you spare no tears for your poor distempered fouls? shall they be fick unto death, and shall not the bowels of your compassion be moved?

But you do not find them fick; you feel no pains for the lofs of appetite. This is the worst fymptom: for fin, which was the cause of the diforder, has now deluded you into the last stage of it. You are dying; and yet the delusion of

fin

fin is fo strong, that you have no concern for your own death, your eternal death. O! my brethren, for the love of God, and all that is dear and valuable to you, in time and eternity, rouse up your tenderness and pity. The Lord grant you may shake off this spiritual lethargy, which makes you so insensible of the distressed flate of your fouls. May he awaken you from this dead fleep of fin, and open your eyes to fee your danger: for indeed we are all in this diffress. Sin has robbed us of all appetite for our spiritual food. We have no defire, no relish for it; nay, while we continue in fin, we abhor it, we loath it, our ftomachs turn against it, and we cannot help shewing our resentment against them, who perfuade us, and earnestly intreat us to take it, and live.

That all men are by nature in this fituation, whether they fee it or not, will be proved in the fequel: indeed it is plain enough from the text: for the plalmift teaches us, that fin is the cause of this disorder, consequently all who have finned must be thus disordered; and are we not all sinners? and are not these sinners in the greatest danger, who do not see that sin has brought them into this disorder? for by not feeling their distress they have no motive to cry out for help: but if it should please God to open their eyes, and to shew them their spiritual malady, at the very sight of their extreme danger they would

be moved to implore deliverance. And the first figh that comes from an awakened heart pierces the ears of our gracious God. The Lord Jesus hears it, and he comes with all the hafte almighty love can make to answer it: for it follows in the 19th verse, " Then they cry unto the Lord " in their trouble, and he faveth them out of "their distresses;" as soon as they cried for falvation the great physician was fent to fave them--- Jehovah fent his word, and healed " them, and they were delivered from their " destructions." His word who healed them was his effential word--even the fecond perfon in the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ--the word who was made flesh and dwelt among us: of this divine word it was foretold in the Old Testament, that he should arise with the glory of the morning fun, bringing healing in his wings for all our maladies: and accordingly the New Testament relates, that Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing ALL manner of fickness, and ALL manner of disease among the people. He healed the bodily difeafes miraculoufly, to prove that he was the almighty physician of the foul. And it is remarkable that he never rejected any person, who applied to him for an outward cure, to demonstrate to us, that he would never cast out any person, who should apply to him for a spiritual cure. You hear in the text, that

fo foon as they cried to him, he was at hand to fave, and they had happy experience of the Pfalmist's description of him--- " He giveth them " medicine to heal their fickness"---He gave them a medicine which prefently restored to them a good appetite. He fent his divine grace into their hearts, which took off their loathing and abhorrence of food, and then raifed in them an hungering and thirsting after Christ's righteoufnefs-and this appetite for it will always be fatisfied: for bleffed are they, fays the almighty physician himself, blessed are they that hunger now: for they shall be filled--they shall have more grace, who have a spiritual appetite, an hungering for more-they shall be even filled with grace: for he hath filled the hungry with good things, with grace to justify, and with grace to fanctify; these are good things, including every thing that is good, short of glory.

And after the free love and mercy of our most adorable physician has raised us from the death of sin, and given us a new life with new faculties and new appetites, and our spiritual-food is now grown pleasant and desirable to our souls, so that we taste it and relish it with joy; how then can we forbear breaking out into his praises, who has been so exceedingly gracious unto us? we cannot refrain. It would be offering violence in us to enjoin silence. We must Vol. IV.

be telling of what our dearest Lord has done for our recovery, and forry we are from our hearts, that we cannot honour him, as we could wish. Our best oblations, our highest praises, what are they, how poor and unworthy a return for his inestimable love? but thou hast required them, bleffed Jesus, and we prefent them before thee, knowing that we stand in need of thy merits to pardon our imperfect praises; O make them fuch as God the Father may accept: for we now praise thee for thy goodness, and we declare to all the world, that thou hast done wonders of mercy for our falvation. And when the prophet enquired " what shall I render unto the " Lord for all his benefits done unto me?" he was led by the holy Spirit to make this refolution. " I will take the cup of falvation, and " call upon the name of the Lord:" he went to the bleffed facrament, there to offer his facrifice of thankfgiving, and there the holy Spirit directs the redeemed of the Lord to go in the last verse of the text. " And they sacrificed the " facrifices of thankfgiving, and declared his " works with rejoicing." This was the facrifice of the Eucharist, to which the persons, who have been healed of their spiritual maladies, go in grateful remembrance of the numerous and endless bleffings, derived to them from the body and blood of Jesus Christ; of which the facrifices of thankfgiving under the law were expreffive

preffive memorials: for at every fuch facrifice the blood of fome pure clean animal was shed, and there were offered with it unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and the flesh of the sacrifice was to be eaten the fame day it was offered. In like manner at our facrifice of thankfgiving, where these figures are realized, we have the facramental blood of the most clean and unfpotted lamb of God, with which we have bread, that is verily and indeed the flesh of Christ to the faithful, when it is, like these wafers and cakes, anointed with the holy unction of the bleffed Spirit: when he accompanies the outward elements with his divine grace and bleffing, then we partake of the body and blood of Christ. And his body is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed--the only meat and drink which can support the foul: for without them we have no life, no fpiritual divine life abiding in us. And after Christ has healed our infirmities, and reftored our loft appetite, where fhould we go for food but to our Lord's table? where can we receive, but from his body and blood, support to our fouls, and growth in grace? he has instituted these outward signs to signify his inward grace, and has affured us, that he will do the fame thing to the foul, which the elements do to the body. Upon this promife the redeemed rest. They go to the holy facrament, both to offer their facrifices of thankf-I 2 giving

giving for what their Saviour hath done for their fouls, and also to receive fresh pledges of his love and bounty. And whoever approaches the Lord's table with this faith, will always find occasion, when he comes from it to declare the works of Christ with rejoicing. God grant this whole scripture may be fulfilled in every one who hears me, that seeing your natural sickness by sin, you may be disposed to sty to the great physician, and may receive such a perfect cure, that his praises may be your delight and joy for ever and ever.

I have now gone through the paraphrase upon the words; you have heard the sense and meaning of them laid open. They contain a most affecting image of the misery and distress of our fallen nature, which we will briefly review by way of spiritual application in these three particulars, under which it was before considered in the paraphrase.

First, The distress of the fick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great physician.

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

And first, As to the distress of the sick, you have seen it drawn by the holy Spirit in the strongest colours: and his painting has an universal likeness. It does not represent this or that man, but every man; every son of sallen Adam is here painted to the life; for before he is redeemed,

deemed, he lies languishing and pining away in a course of sin: his soul is in such a bad habit, as his body is in, when it has loft all appetite for food, and not only does not defire it, but even loaths it, and continues in this weak feeble condition, until it draws near to the gates of death. Now Christ is the only support and food of the finful foul; and yet it has no appetite for him, not only does not defire him, but even loaths and abhors him, while it is drawing near to the gates of death, and it will be the Lord's mercy, if the gates be not foon shut upon it.

And now, my brethren, let me bring this point home to you. Do you indeed believe, that this is a true picture of human nature, and of every one of you in your finful state, before you have redemption? through faith in the blood of Jefus? the holy Spirit who drew it, declares it is. And why should you not believe him? for it is founded upon a plain matter of fact, which you cannot deny, and that is, the univerfal corruption of mankind. If they be all finners by nature, which is as certain as that they are men by nature, then they are all fick, and this picture is a true likeness of them all: for sin brings the foul low, and weakens its faculties, as fickness does the body and its faculties; and as fickness takes away the appetite of the body, and creates an aversion to food, so does fin take away the appetite of the foul, and create an aversion to elody: 3

its food. This is plain matter of fact, and it is fcripture too: for fin is the cause of this fpiritual malady, and fince all men have finned, all men therefore are spiritually diseased with the pains and miferies of fin. And there is no remedy upon earth, no human means, either by simple repentance, or by morality, to heal this dangerous fickness. The divine and almighty physician is the only healer of the nations, but the moralist and the infidel want him not-the whole want no physician, but they that are fick, but they, who fee and feel the evil effects of fin, earnestly feek and implore his help, and for them he has healing in his wings; as the Evangelist has remarked—and "Jesus " healed all that were fick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, " faying, himself took our infirmities and bare " our fickneffes." And when took he our infirmities, and bare our ficknesses? was it not when he bare our fins in his own body upon the tree? for by his stripes we are healed. When he took away our fins, he then had power to heal us, and confequently if he had not taken our fins away, we could not have been healed: but we must have remained in the foul leprofy of our transgressions, and in such a like condition as the prophet Isaiah has described. " Ah! " finful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a " feed of evil doers, children of corrupters-the " whole

"whole head is fick, and the whole heart is faint—from the fole of the foot, even unto the head there is no foundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying fores." This is a true description of all finful people, and of every finner in particular. And the image is just and expressive if you apply to the foul what is here faid of the body: for fin makes the whole head fick, and the whole heart faint. Sin disorders all the faculties of the foul, so that from the fole of the foot even unto the head, there is no foundness; they are all corrupt, and the corruption will as certainly end in the destruction of the foul, as a like total corruption in the body would end in its destruction.

But I have heard persons enquiring, how can this be? can I be thus sick, even unto death, and not know it, and not feel it? most undoubtedly you may. Your case may be dangerous, even desperate, and yet you may have no sense of it: for this is a spiritual disease, and the cause of it is sin, and every sin obscures and blinds the eyes of the soul, and makes its other senses gross and thick, and an habit of sin deadens them entirely, what St. Paul, speaking of the unregenerate, calls being past all feeling. So that you may be sick unto death, and yet be past all feeling. The body in the mean while may be in health, and the soul may be dying. The body may be as strong as Sampson, and yet the poor soul may

be languishing and fainting, and drawing near to the gates of death: and it is the nearer the less apprehensive you are of it. If fin has so blinded and deluded you, that you neither fee your guilt, nor feel your danger, your case I pronounce to be at present desperate. You stand on the precipice. You are on the very brink of ruin--one step more, and behold the pit is open. You fall. You are lost for ever. Eternal destruction is your portion. Men and brethren, take warning. I intreat you by the tender mercies of our Lord Jesus Christ to stop, and to consider your case. Unless you are in love with pain and mifery, be perfuaded to request of our God, to open your eyes. Let me beg of you, for I fee your extreme danger, and out of love to your fouls I importune you, to defire God to shew your true state. And will. you not vouchfafe to fend up one defire to him for yourselves? but are you fully determined to keep your eyes shut against your danger, and to go on in your fins? would to God I knew the proper motives to awaken your consciences, and to make you fensible, that your sickness is unto death, if I did, you should not sleep a moment longer upon the brink of eternal destruction: for there indeed you lay, whether you fee your danger or not. And can none of my exhortations, none of my friendly intreaties prevail with you to rouse up and to look into your own hearts, and to examine your state and condition? cannot

I prevail? if you still turn a deaf ear to me, O blessed Jesus, I will then turn to thee. Thou God of love, send thy good Spirit upon every person here present, on whom my arguments have made no impression, and shew them the dangerous malady of sin; that seeling the pain and misery of it, there may be raised in their hearts a strong cry for thy salvation. And may our most adorable God now work in you this happy change, that you may be disposed to apply for your cure to the great physician of souls.

Which is the fecond remark. You have heard how he treated the fick perfons in the text. So foon as they cried to him for help, he came, and by a remedy which never failed restored them to perfect health; and he treats all his patients with the fame love and mercy. He only waits, till they be made to fee their mifery, and to cry unto him for deliverance: and if it be but one deep figh, but one short prayer, " Lord " Jesus, be merciful unto me a sinner," if it come from the heart, he will be merciful: for his readiness to relieve the distressed is the second part of this beautiful painting--" Then they " cried unto the Lord," fays the Pfalmift, " in " their trouble, and he delivered them from their " diftreffes--he fent his word and healed them--" The Lord Jesus himself came. The great healer of the nations heard their cries, the bowels of his compassion were moved at the fight of their mifery,

mifery, and that tender heart which bled for them on the crofs, now melted into pity: for he defireth not the death of finners, but rather that they should repent and live. He died to give them life, and now they are asking for it, how can he refuse it? can he, who came down from heaven, and left his eternal throne, and laid afide his divine glory for a time; can he, who went through the world poor and despised, hungry, and thirsty, and weary, can he be without love? did not he fubmit to this low abasement, and to these miferies, in order that he might be the fovereign physician of sinners? And now he has laid them proftrate at his feet, humbly imploring his free grace to raife them up, is it impossible he should deny to heal them? The crucified Saviour cannot want love-the almighty God cannot want power-and therefore whofoever cometh unto him for cure, he will in no wife cast out.

Such is Jesus—our most adorable physician—and are you not in love with his amiable character? how should it endear him to us, that he is always disposed freely to heal, and that there is no spiritual disease so dangerous and inveterate, but he has skill to heal it, nor any so offensive or odious in his sight, but he has mercy to heal it? he neither wants will nor power. And can you believe this, are you verily persuaded, that the God of love is ready to heal you of all your maladies, and will you not come to him for a cure? when

when the bleffed Jesus invites, when he presses you to accept health and falvation at his hands, what can tempt you to reject his gracious offer? I now stand up in his name, and by his authority now proclaim these tidings of great joy-" I will " heal their backflidings, I will love them freely." 'These are our Lord's own words in the prophet Hofea xiv. 4. And because he loves finners freely, therefore he heals them freely. He requires no previous condition, but that they fee and feel their fickness, and this he makes them fenfible of, and then his free grace restores them to perfect health. And to fuch a physician, who would not apply? to a physician who is almighty to heal, and whose love refuses none that apply to him, be they ever fo fick and finful-and who does all this freely. Free grace is his only motive. And upon hearing of fuch a phyfician, and knowing that you are finners, and want his help, will any of you think of leaving the church, without applying to him for relief? God forbid. I hope none of you will be fuch enemies to yourfelves. What! will you prefer fickness to health, and pain to pleasure? Can you be thus infatuated by fin? Is there any of you still under this strong delution? if you are, may the almighty phyfician take your case into his own hands, and out of his infinite love and compassion first dispose you to feek health from him, and then freely bestow it upon you. Bleffed Jefus, let thy divine power healer be

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be now present to heal every one of us, that we may all join in giving thanks and glory to thy name, which is the Pfalmist's third remark in the text. direc vid we bus senser and ai qui beaft won i

I shall speak very briefly to this particular, because it concerns only those persons, who have experienced the skill of the great physician. They alone are here called upon to offer their facrifice of thankfgiving. None can be thankful to Christ, but they who have tafted of his redeeming love: because thankfulness arises from our sense of his mercy. We must first cry unto him to save us from the mortal difease of fin, and afterwards have received falvation, before our minds are rightly disposed to be thankful. And when the almighty healer has thus graciously restored us, we can no more with this experience of his love refrain from his praises, than we can refrain from breathing: the redeemed of the Lord praise him as freely as they breathe: for praise is as much the breath of a redeemed foul, as air is of his body. The redeemed cannot be filent. It is their delight and joy, and they are never more happy, than when they are praising the Lord Jesus for his goodness, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for their falvation. O! may the number of the redeemed of the Lord increase daily. May the honour and praise of our almighty physician fpread, and be celebrated with more tongues, and with more grateful hearts. O thou fovereign healer od

healer of every finful malady, let thy fame be more known in the earth, and thy faving health among all nations. Manifest thy power to heal all the diseases of fin, but more especially manifest it to this congregation. O thou God of love, let thy power now be present to heal. We call upon thee, bleffed Jesus, we earnestly intreat thee, to hear us, and grant that no one perfon may leave this place, until they either defire to find, or do indeed find, that thou art a most loving God, almighty to heal the greatest of finners: and for these our prayers we defire acceptance through thine infinite merits, that thou mayest answer them to the glory of God the Father, and to the honor of the holy Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worship and adore, now and for ever. Amen.

chiefe of men. Let dessemble and on the congregation of the dessemble and profession in the affects of hymn, calls upon us to be thankful for the bless are from , calls upon and in order to inspire us with the predemption fulness, he for the few us no order reprofestation of usan's using the few was norder to reprofestation of usan's using the few was norder to reduce the three of usan's radional. The

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PSALM CVII. 23-33.

They that go down to the fea in ships, that do bufiness in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep: For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths, their foul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble. and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their defired haven. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for bis goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

THE Pfalmist, in this divine hymn, calls upon us to be thankful for the blessings of redemption, and in order to inspire us with the greater thankfulness, he sets before us a perfect representation of man's misery before he is redeemed. The three

three first parts of this facred painting have been already confidered. We have feen, that man, in his natural fallen flate, is as much at a lofs to find out the way to heaven, as a traveller would be in some vast desert, where he is quite loft and ready to perish. He is as much unable to walk in the way, even if he were directed aright, being fast bound with the chains of sin, as a prifoner would be, who is shut up in a dungeon, and there bound with mifery and iron. And if his chains were knocked off, and the prison doors thrown open, yet he is in fuch a weak languishing condition, that he cannot stir one step. He has fo weakened and impaired his faculties by a course of fin, which has brought on him a total loss of appetite, and has so worn him away, that he is now near to the gates of death. Thefe are the three beautiful images, under which the holy Spirit has drawn the picture of our fallen nature. The fourth, which puts a finishing hand to the performance, is contained in the words now read; wherein our diffress is still heightened, and our danger is painted in more ftrong colouring. The fubject of this last piece is a fform at fea, and I believe there is not in the universe an object more great and striking, nor is it possible to represent it in words more clear, or in descriptions more affecting, than what the holy Spirit has here used. May he dispose your hearts to receive the instruction, which they hold

out to you, that every one of you may reap the profit from them, for which he inspired them and left them upon record. And to this end you will look up to him for his grace and bleffing, while I am,

First, Laying before you a paraphrase upon the words; and then,

Secondly, Applying the doctrine contained in them to your spiritual benefit and improvement. And,

First, The holy Spirit has here given us the representation of a fform at sea; which is so expressive and sublime, that the bare reading of it is fufficient to humble the pride of human genius. If one of the best heathen poets had undertaken to write upon the fubject, he would probably have given us a volume upon it. Whereas this facred drawing, though it be short, is nevertheless absolutely complete. The description rifes up to the greatness of the subject, and every circumstance in the order it is mentioned heightens what went before, and makes the whole fo full and perfect, that they who have been in a fform at fea, and in danger, of being cast away, cannot but tremble at this relation of it. " They who go down to the " fea in ships, and occupy their business in great " waters; these men see the works of the Lord, " and his wonders in the deep." We fee his wonders every where; the creation is full of them. tuo

them. In every place, in every condition of life, we may behold evident marks of almighty power and infinite wifdom; but they who live a feafaring life, have more evident marks than any other persons: for they see the most wonderful display of the divine attributes. Upon the land we can fcarce form an idea of what they feel and endure at fea, when at the word of God, " the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up " the waves thereof." The accidents of the fform, and the causes on which they depend, are here fo justly represented, that it is not possible to fee a more affecting picture. You may here behold diffinctly and in beautiful order, the command of God-the action of the wind--the rage of the waves--- and the diffress of the mariners. God commands the wind to arife--the wind raifes and lifts up the waves of the fea---the waves beat furioufly against the vessel--put her in danger---and this danger raifes another tempest in the souls of the poor mariners. In this chain of causes and effects God holds the first place; for he commandeth the stormy wind, and then the wind lifteth up the waves of the deep. Although the wind be nothing but air in motion, yet there is no agent in nature capable of acting with greater force and violence. The fea, in a perfect calm, appears to be one beautiful and even plain, fmooth as the polished marble; but the wind no fooner begins to blow, VOL. IV. K than

than it is ruffled and agitated. And when it blows with might and fury, it toffes up the waves, and beats them one against another with fuch impetuofity, that the noise is inceffant, and as loud as thunder. And then heaping wave upon wave, they here fwell into lofty mountains, and there fink down into deep and horrible vallies. The natural weight of the water carries it down, and the violence of the ftorm raifes it up, and by the opposition of these two jarring elements there is formed the most dreadful conflict, which is to be feen in the universe; even on the shore, where you are fafe, yet you cannot behold it without horror. But what must be their situation who are in the midst of the storm, and over whose heads the raging billows are breaking every moment? how great must be their distress, when they find their veffel become the fport of the winds and waves, and fometimes carried up to heaven, up high into the air, and prefently down again into the deep? And to give us a strong image of the confusion of the mariners, the holy Spirit adds, that they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, tossed from one fide to the other, thrown up and down, and reeling about, as unable to walk upright in the ship, as a drunken man is upon the land. In this diffress they find the rudder, and the fails, and the oars, of no use. The fury of the wind and storm carry the vessel where they please, and the 3

the waves beating against her with all their might, in different parts, and in different directions, shake her strongest timbers, and make fuch wide leaks, into which the fea comes pouring in, that the affrighted mariners are at their wits end. All their wisdom is swallowed up. The light of reason cannot suggest to them any expedient, or if it could, yet the ftrength and arm of flesh are not able to carry it into execution. All hope of being faved is now taken away, and their fouls are in the utmost fear and dread, and melt away because of the trouble, as it is here expressed-no stability is left, no courage Their minds are agitated like the remains ocean, and in as much confusion: for besides the lofs of the veffel, and of the goods, on which they fet but too great a value, they can turn their eyes no way, but they fee the waves ready to fwallow them up, and death awaiting them on every fide. No defired shore, no favourable haven appears. On earth there is no prospect of deliverance.

This is a short sketch of the holy Spirit's defcription, which, how briefly soever I may have represented it, is nevertheless perfectly expressive and sublime in itself, and will appear more so to them, who have seen a storm in its highest rage and sury: for if you have never seen one, you can form but very faint ideas of it. I judge thus from my own experience: for I have seen many froms from the shore, and thought I could have given a good description of them; but when I was afterwards really in one, and in danger, I then found that my former knowledge was very imperfect. To be in a fform at fea is as different from feeing it from the shore, as a painted fform differs from a real one. It felt very differently to me from what it had ever done before; when I was in the midst of the waves, and was toffed up to heaven, and then down again to the deep. The fea ran fo high, that I well remember, when our ship was down in the deep, between two waves, I could not fee the top of the mast of a large vessel, which came very near us during the storm. You may judge what a fituation we were then in. I believe the floutest heart among you would have trembled upon this occasion. If you would know how you should have behaved, put yourselves in the fame fituation we were in. Suppose yourselves to have been feveral days in a troubled fea, toffed with winds and tempests, and at last all hopes of being faved began to fail. What do you think would be your fentiments, if the ftorm should ftill continue, the veffel should grow leaky and ready to fink, and inftant death was before your eyes? if you could really suppose yourselves to be in this fituation, you would want none of my arguments to perfuade you to feek help from God in fuch a time of need. Would not you

pray, and intreat him with ffrong crying and tears to come to your affiftance? O with what earnestness would your fouls implore and beg him to stretch out his merciful hand, and fave you from perishing! let there then be raifed in your hearts the fame firong crying and tears, that you may be delivered from a more dreadful fform, than what we have been confidering. This tempest in the natural world is but a faint image of a much greater, which fin has occasioned in the spiritual world. The one is but a painted storm compared to the other. And to this more terrible fform you are all subject. Every son of Adam being a finner, is embarked on a troubled fea, where the winds and waves are contrary: for it must be remembered, that this description cannot be peculiar to failors, because the whole Pfalm is spiritual, it belongs to the redeemed of the Lord, and all his redeemed people do not literally go down to the fea in ships, nor do they meet with florms from the rage of winds and waves; and yet they are all called upon to be thankful for being delivered from fome ftorm, confequently they were all in this ftorm before they were redeemed, and they were thrown into it by the fame cause, which made them lose themselves in the wilderness--fall into the pit--ficken and pine away for want of appetite. Sin was the fruitful parent of all these miseries. And the form which fin raifes is in the foul.

It is a spiritual tempest of which the natural is a picture. The holy Spirit intended the one should be a natural representation of the other. He gave us the outward image that we might in it fee the likeness of an inward storm. And he himself in his own word has applied the outward image to represent these inward objects, and therefore we have his own infallible application of the text; wherein he supposes us all to be embarked upon a voyage to the haven of eternal rest. And we failed thither on a smooth unruffled fea, until fin entered into the world, and raifed the winds, and made the waves beat against us, and a furious storm darkened the face of the sky, and hid the defired haven from our fight. And here the holy Spirit begins his description--" They who go down to the sea," into the ever moving, bufy, agitated world, which fin has made like the troubled fea, " in " fhips," in worldly focieties, opposed to the ark of the church, which is but one, " and do " business in great waters," and are occupied in worldly bufiness among the crowd, and in the buftle of worldly men. " Thefe fee the works " of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep"--they fee a full display of his wonderful works in his manner of bringing these worldly people into diffress: for he commandeth, all afflictions come by his order and appointment, this especially, which raifeth the stormy wind, which moveth

moveth the spirit of the world to oppose its own people, and lifteth up the waves thereof to diftress them. Worldly men meet with a sea of troubles: for the wicked are like the troubled fea when it cannot rest: wave after wave beat against them, and swell and lift up themselves ftill higher and higher, until the raging billows break over their heads. And when these afflictions come, they are fo diffressed, their minds are toffed and agitated, that they can find no rest. Sometimes they mount up to heaven carried up and fwelled with spiritual pride, then again they go down to the depths, funk with distrust and despair--their soul melteth away, has no stability or courage left, because of the trouble. The trouble is fo great, that the light of reason is put out. The boasted moral sense refuses to take the helm, and the rectitude and dignity of human nature dare not direct. The religion of nature and the fitness of things aided with all the graces and ornaments of the arts and sciences, and set off with the lustre of clasfical learning, cannot hinder them from reeling to and fro, and ftaggering like a drunken man. Nay, with all these learned and polite accomplishments, they are at their wits end, quite unable to find out any expedient to extricate them from their diffress.

This is a true picture of man in his natural state. It is drawn by the spirit of God, and is

the likeness of every fon of Adam; for fin has thrown them upon this boifterous fea, and raifed this furious storm against them, and the spirit of the world and the devil keep it up in all its fury, and drive its mighty billows over their heads. And they can do nothing to escape perishing in the deep waters. Nothing but death is before them. Oh may the God of mercy open your eyes to fee your danger, that finding no help upon earth, you may be disposed to look up to him, from whom alone can your falvation come! and being thus disposed, then you will follow them in the text, " who cried unto the Lord in " their trouble, and he delivered them out of " their diffresses."

This is the fecond part of the beautiful painting in the text. Happy was the affliction which made them feek help from God: for while the world fmiled on them, they were apt to forget heaven. But when affliction pressed fore upon them, and no human relief offered, the most flupid and hardened finners were then ready to ask relief from God, and to seek him in their diffrefs, although they had forgotten and defpifed him in their prosperity. But no affliction works this happy effect more certainly, than the dangers of the fea, which are fo great, and in a storm fo far out of the reach of any fuccour, that there are very few, in fuch a case, who do not cry unto God for help. And hence comes the

common

common faying-" that they, who know not " how to pray, should go to fea to learn." A form is an excellent teacher, it forces men to pray, it makes the most profane and irreligious look up to heaven, and if they once look up with the prayer of the heart, our God, out of his infinite love, immediately hears and answers. " Call upon me, fays he, in the day of trou-" ble, fo will I hear thee. And it shall come to " pass, that before they call I will answer, and " while they are yet fpeaking, I will hear." Thus prayer engages the almighty on their fide, and then nothing is impossible to it. Prayer commands the elements---changes the feafons--stops the fun in its course-quenches the violence of fire---and calms the most tempestuous fea. You faw these poor mariners in distress, they had exerted all their skill, and toiled so long as their strength lasted, but to no purpose: the from ftill raged, and grew more violent, to that all efforts being in vain they give up their vessel to the fury of the winds and waves, and then at last betake themselves to their prayers. and the prayer of faith did for them, what the united skill and strength of all the men in the world could never have effected. It calmed the wind, it quieted the waves, it fmoothed the fea, and carried the shattered vessel safe to the defired haven: for upon their crying to him, " he maketh the fform a calm, fo that the waves " thereof

"thereof are still, then are they glad, because "they be quiet, and so he bringeth them unto "their desired haven." And this deliverance is to them a matter of great gladness. The past danger inhances the present safety—the storm which they have escaped now increases their enjoyment of the desired haven: for it is certain we relish prosperity better after adversity, peace after war, and health after sickness. A calm is never so pleasant as after a storm. And while we are tasting the pleasures of it, how can we avoid acknowledging our deliverance with gratitude.

This is the third part of the painting in the text. So foon as these mariners are delivered. they inftantly offer up their facrifice of thankfgiving-" O that men would therefore praise the " Lord for his goodness, and declare the won-" ders that he doeth for the children of men." The wonders, which he had wrought, deferved their best thanks, not only in private, but also in public, not only in the closet, but also in the great congregation. And the holy Spirit in the last words calls upon them to exalt their deliverer in the congregation of the people, and to praise him in the affembly of the elders, i. e. openly, in the face of the church, and if they should neglect this, I appeal unto you all, whether fuch ungrateful wretches did not deferve to have perished unregarded in the storm.

I have

I have now confidered the paraphrase upon the words, and have set before you the lively painting of our natural state, which they contain, and I come, secondly, to the spiritual use and application of them.

The image is this. Mankind before they are redeemed, are like a ship in a stormy sea, agitated with passions, tossed up and down with cares, and fo blown about with various temptations, that they are never at rest. This is their calmest state in the smiling day of smooth prosperity: but afflictions will come, the afflictions of fin and fatan and the world will raife a violent ftorm, which all the wit and ftrength of man cannot escape. He will foon be swallowed up of the devouring waves; unless that fame God who created the fea, fpeak to it, " peace, be " ftill." We are all in the fame fituation the apostles were, when they were alone in the evening in the midst of the sea, and the wind and the waves were contrary; against which they toiled rowing in vain, until Chrift came to them walking upon the fea, and commanded the winds to ceafe, and the waves to be still. Upon which there was a great calm: for they knew his voice, who had fpoken them into being, and they obeyed. His word is almighty to compose and still the raging war of the most furious elements. And he is as almighty in the spiritual world, as he is in the natural. Into whatever foul he enters,

he commands all the jarring passions to be still, and there is indeed a blessed calm. O may the almighty Saviour speak thus unto you all, that you may fail on a smooth unrussed sea, until you arrive safe at the desired haven of eternal rest!

And now, my brethren, after what has been faid in this and the preceding lectures of man's fallen state, let me ask, what opinion you entertain of it? do you really think, that the image which the holy Spirit has fet before you this day is true, and drawn from nature? do you indeed believe, that fin has thrown you upon the wide and furious ocean, that the spirit of the world and the devil have raifed a tempest against you, and that you are every moment in danger of being fwallowed up by the merciless waves, and that there is no deliverer in heaven or earth, but the Lord Jesus? if you do not believe this truth, upon what principles do you deny it? not upon fcripture principles; for it is very common in fcripture to describe the finful state of man under this image. The book of Psalms is full of it. In the 18th, Christ complaining of his enemies fays, " the floods of ungodly men made me " afraid, but God took me, he drew me out of " many waters, he delivered me from my ftrong " enemies"—here the many waters and the strong enemies stand for the same persons. The 69th Psalm begins thus-" fave me, O God, for " the

" the waters are come in, even unto my foul, I " am come into deep waters, where the floods "overflow me;" and then in the 14th verse Christ prays for deliverance in these words, " let " me be delivered from them that hate me, and " out of the deep waters"—the fame ungodly men who hated him are also called deep waters. He prays again in the 144th Pfalm, verse 7, " fend thine hand from above, rid me and deliver " me out of the great waters, and from the hand " of strange children." And these strange children are compared to troubled waters throughout the Prophets, and even to the end of the New Testament. St. James likens the inconstant wavering man to a wave of the fea, driven with the wind and toffed, and St. Jude calls the ungodly infidels raging waves of the fea, foaming out their own shame. And St. John, in the 17th chapter of the Revelation, has given us a key to open all these scriptures; he was shewn in a vilion the judgment of the great whore that fitteth upon many waters-and in the 15th verse, the angel explains the vision, and fays, " the waters " which thou fawest, where the whore sitteth, " are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and " tongues," all the unconverted race of mankind of every nation and tongue.

These scriptures are plain and express, and the meaning of them cannot be mistaken. If

you deny the evidence which they give, you must deny the plainest matter of fact in the world: for if you look upon the troubled face of the fea, and then look into the working of your own fouls, you must observe the most striking likenefs. The mind is as feldom ferene and calm, as the face of the ocean is: various passions fucceeding one another in perpetual fluctuation forbid it to rest, they are always agitating and tofling it, opinions are continually changing, tempers ever fluctuating, as wave follows wave, fashions are never at a stand, not only in dress, but also in learning, one system still pushing out another, ebbing and flowing, like the tide, and even the moral relations, and the moral fitness of things, notwithstanding their metaphysical eternity, are always fluctuating and changing, and yet always reftlefs. And it cannot be otherwife, because the mind of fallen man is the very picture of the troubled fea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, troubled like the fea, like it cannot rest, like it casting up the mire of corruption, and the dirt of fenfuality, confequently there is no peace, faith my God to the wicked. And is not this altogether the perfect likeness of the changeable inconstant world, whose tempers, passions, purfuits, and vices, are like the waves of the fea, fucceeding one another in perpetual fluctuation and diforder?

Thus experience confirms the testimony of fcripture, and by the mouth of these two witneffes the truth ought to be established. And what farther objection will you make to it? you will not fay, that you do not find it to be a matter of fact by your own experience. Would to God none of you made this objection: for it does not prove that you are not in a storm, but only that you are feized with a finful lethargy, and you doze and fleep on, while the yessel is finking. O my brethren, this is the strongest delusion of fin, and for the love of God and your own fouls, awake. You are indeed perishing, fee, the waves are breaking in upon you, death is at hand, and will not your own fafety induce you to shake off this lethargy? what a wonderful delufion is this? fatan and the world have been crying unto you, peace, peace, when there is no peace; they have lulled conscience afleep, and probably have feared it with an hot iron, and rendered it past feeling. In this case you will not feel your danger, although you are just finking; the waves will foon swallow you up, and then you will find a ftorm, when the wrath of the almighty falls upon you, of which the greatest fury of winds and waves can give but a very faint and imperfect image. God grant you may escape it! and may his grace awaken all your consciences, who sleep in sin! may the infinite love of the bleffed Jefus open

your eyes, and shew you your danger, that you may be led to cry unto him for deliverance! which is the

Second remark I have to make. And this relates to those persons among you, who find they are in a fform, and are willing to come to Christ, as these redeemed of the Lord did in the text, that he may command the winds and the waves, and there may be a calm. If you can but once fee your danger, you are fafe: for your diffress cannot be greater than the Redeemer's mercy. Although you find yourselves finking in the mighty waters, yet you have only to cry with Peter on the same occasion, Lord save me, and Jefus will certainly stretch forth his almighty arm, and you shall be faved. If you do but see your danger, and out of the deep fense of it cry unto him for help, he will not cast out your prayer: for he is a God of love, and his love is almighty to fave. Be your fins ever fo great, ever fo numerous, your danger from them ever fo imminent, fly but to the altar of his mercy, and take hold of the merits of that most precious blood, which was shed upon it, and then you are fafe. For the blood of the lamb of God was shed for finners, and no sinner ever fought aright to partake of the merits of it, and was cast out. I came not, says the blessed Jesus, I came not to call the righteous, but finners to repentance. Sinners alone want a Saviour, and

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our God was therefore called Jefus, because he was to fave his people from their fins, and he has promifed in the text, that fo foon as they cry unto him out of the deep fense of their distrefs, he will hear and answer: for he is always more ready to fave, than they are to cry unto him for falvation. And may these considerations haften you to feek this help! into whatever diffress fin may have thrown you, if it has exposed you to all the storms and tempests of the world, yet here is an almighty deliverer. The winds and the waves know his voice, and when he commands, they obey. At his word the jarring elements are filent in the natural world, and they will be the fame in the spiritual. If he speak peace unto your fouls, there will be a calm indeed. The rage of conscience, agitated by the dark blafts of guilt, and by the horrible waves of mifery, will presently subside, all the inconstant tempers, and ruffled passions will be composed, and a ferenity, but little short of heaven, will enfue.

Such is the God of our falvation; whoever among you then fees your danger, and wishes for deliverance, come to our God and he will fave you. Come to the Lord Jesus, with strong crying and tears, and you have his word for it, that you shall find in him an almighty deliverer. O ye poor distressed souls, whom conscience and Vol. IV.

guilt torment, here is your only remedy. Look up to your redeeming God: for his mercy is above your distresses. Your offences may be great against him, but they cannot be so great as you will find by faith his love is to you. He loved you even when you left him, how much more will he love you now you are returning? remember what he fuffered for you: for your fins he fweat great drops of blood-for your fins he endured the torments of his bitter passion -for your fins he bled on the crofs-and for your fins he died-his love to you was ftronger than death: and therefore be not difcouraged at the fight of your own wickedness. He will receive you, be ye ever so finful; he will not shut you out, if ye have been ever so ungrateful. Only come to him this day; and let there be raifed in your hearts a strong cry for his falvation. Now try the truth of what you have heard. Seek him with your most fervent defires and earnest prayers, and see whether he be not the almighty Saviour of finners. And if you come believing, as these redeemed of the Lord did in the text, who when they faw no way left to escape, at last looked up to him, then he will as certainly fave you, as he did them. O may his bleffed Spirit put it into all your hearts to feek his love, until he bring you to the haven, where you would be, first to the

the holy haven of the church militant, and then to the happy haven of the church triumphant!

And

After you have received his mighty deliverance, after he has brought you fafe from the fforms of the world, and has calmed the winds, and composed the waves, which opposed your voyage to the defired haven, has made you a just and holy member of the ark of his church, and has placed you fecurely in it; after he has done these wonders for you, is it possible for you to be filent in your deliverer's praise? while you have a grateful sense of his benefits fresh in mind, you will certainly be celebrating them. You cannot refrain from the just tribute of thanks. And this is the third and last part of the beautiful painting in the text, "O that men would there-" fore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for " his wonderful works to the children of men." And they who have been in danger, and they who have been delivered, and now live in fafety and joy, they must be telling of his falvation all the day long. Their hearts overflow with gratitude and praise. Redemption is their favourite fubject, and the very name of their Redeemer is dear and precious. JESUS is a word that founds exceeding fweet and pleasant in their ears: they find continual delight in speaking of their redeeming God, and in declaring the wonders which he hath done for their redemption. And L 2 they

they praise him with the gratitude of the heart, and with the thankfulness of all the affections. not only in private, but also in public, not only with their lips, but with their lives; for the praises of a pure and holy life are the best facrifices of thankfgiving which we can now offer. And may our almighty God and Saviour grant, that every one of you may thus praise him! O blessed Jesus! let this scripture be fulfilled to day in this whole congregation. Let not one of them depart until they fee upon what a ftormy ocean they are all embarked, and what dreadful winds and waves fin and fatan and the world have raifed against them. Shew them their danger, that they may fly unto thee for help. And the moment they cry unto thee be at hand, O God of love, to hear and answer. And bring them fafe by thy good Spirit from the storms and tempels of this world unto the defired haven. Bleffed Jesus say unto our troubled fouls, peace, be still. Let thy grace calm all our passions, and fo fmooth all our ruffled tempers, that every one of us may go out of the church in perfect love with thee, and with one another. Hear us, most adorable Saviour, and answer us to the glory of the Father, and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, three persons of one undivided essence, whom we worship and adore now and for ever. deening God, and in declaring the women

which he hath done for their redemption.

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one arms SERMON VII.

Paul by A Psalm (evil. 33—39.

He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground: a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell
therein: he turneth the wilderness into a standing
water, and dry ground into water-springs, and
there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may
prepare a city for habitation: and sow the fields,
and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of
increase; he blesseth them also so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

In the former parts of this divine hymn we have feen the mifery and diffress of mankind in their fallen state, from which, so soon as they were made thoroughly sensible of it, and humbled under it, our gracious Redeemer delivered them. He came upon their first cry, and his almighty arm brought salvation. And his love was equal to his power: for he not only saved them from their misery and distress, which was indeed a most adorable act of free and unmerited grace, but he also enriched them with his divine and heavenly blessings, which, since they could never m rit, they could therefore have no reason ever

to expect. But mercy is the diftinguishing attribute of our Lord Jesus. He is free to pardon-free to give. Whofoever cometh unto him, he will in no wife cast out, neither out of his love here, nor his glory hereafter. And shall not they, who have tafted of his redeeming love, comply with the Prophet's request in this Psalm? thall not they be thankful? confider from what a depth of mifery his free grace has raifed them, and then judge how it is possible for them to refuse their due tribute of thankfulness? you faw them first in the wilderness, lost and starving travellers, ready to perish; you beheld them falling into the pit, where the enemy found them, and put them in chains of mifery and iron; and how greatly were you moved at the fight of their fickness, when they lay pining away through a total loss of appetite, and were grown fo weak and feeble, that death was ready to take them into the prison of the grave, and to shut its gates upon them! and what was the worst of all, the foul was never at rest; sin, which brought them into these miseries, made them still more miserable under them. Guilt would not fuffer any of the faculties to be composed, and conscience never knew, what it was to be in a calm. Indeed the whole man, body and foul, were in fuch a continual ferment, and fo distressed for fear of perishing every moment, that nothing in nature could fo perfectly represent their fituation, as the diffrefs

diffress of mariners at fea in a violent storm. These are the dark scenes, in which the unconverted and unregenerate lay: you have beheld the shady part of their picture, now you are to look upon a more agreeable and pleafing profpect. Under the image which we are to view at present, the holy Spirit has given us a beautiful painting of their deliverance, and we fee the fame persons, who lay in the most exquisite distress, here placed in the most delightful and happy circumstances. They are brought out of the wilderness, and out of the pit, and are healed of all their infirmities, and their confciences are composed and calmed---they are pardoned freely ---made just and holy--admitted into the one true church of Christ--and blessed in it by him with all true spiritual graces. O what an entire and happy change is this! God grant, that every unconverted person here present may experience it! may he turn the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-fprings, &c. May the love of our almighty deliverer exert his power this day, and fulfil every word of what is here faid of the Gentile church in this whole congregation, while I am

First, Laying before you a comment upon the words, and

Secondly, Bringing the doctrine contained in them home to your hearts, by way of spiritual application.

The holy Spirit begins with a description of the rejecting of the Jewish church, and of the transferring of its privileges and graces to the Gentiles. " He turneth rivers into a wilder-" nefs, and the water-fprings into dry ground." This passage is here applied in a spiritual sense. It relates to redemption. And nothing more is necessary to the understanding of it, than to remember, that water is in fcripture, the known and established emblem of the holy Spirit. What the one does in nature, the other does in grace. St. John puts the matter beyond all doubt, in his comment upon Christ's words, who had been fpeaking of the waters which should flow from believers, but this, fays he, he spake of the spirit. And the other scriptures speak of the spirit under the fame image. A church enriched with the graces of heaven is compared by the Prophets to a well-watered garden (Ifaiah lyiii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 12.) to the paradife of God, watered with its four fruitful rivers: for as every thing ufeful and ornamental in the vegetable world is raifed up by water, fo is every thing in the spiritual world raifed up by the holy Spirit. And in the Jewish church he had caused every virtue abundantly to grow; it was nourished with the streams of his divine grace, enriched with the dew of heaven, and bleffed with rivers of comfort, infomuch that it wanted no manner of thing that is good. St. Paul thus enumerates the bleffings of the Ifraelites

Ifraelites--" to whom pertaineth the adoption, " and the glory, and the covenants, and the " giving of the law, and the fervice of God, " and the promifes, whose are the fathers, and " of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." Rom. ix. 4. And when he came, this once favourite church would not receive him for the promifed Messiah, but rejected and murdered him. For which crime the greatest part of the Jewish nation was cut off, and the rest according to their own prophecies were dispersed over the face of the earth, and they will continue difperfed, until they receive Jesus of Nazareth for their Saviour and their God. While they justify the horrid rebellion of their fore-fathers, who crucified the Lord of life, the veil must remain upon their hearts; and it is remarkably upon them at present: for they are the most stupidly infatuated of all people--living without either civil or ecclefiaftical polity-without a templewithout a priest---without facrifices---without an atonement---and indeed they are now without a God; because they have rejected the true God, the bleffed trinity of their fathers, and worship they know not what; they have fet up fome strange kind of an infinitely extended metaphysical being, whom they call the one fupreme God, and who never had any existence but what the enemies of christianity have been pleased to give him. Thus they have turned the once fruitful ch r.h

church into a wilderness. And the holy Spirit here describes them in this fituation. The church of God, which he had bleffed with his promifes, and with his prophets, and had enriched with the continual streams of his grace, was now made barren. When it rejected that God and Saviour, on whom its whole economy was founded, then he took away all its privileges and bleffings, and it has been ever fince a poor dead barren wildernefs. Deprived of his grace, it was reduced to the fame state, which the most fruitful country would foon be in, if it should be deprived of the rain and dew of heaven: for then nothing could grow. It would become a barren defart. Apply this to the prefent state of the Jews, and you fee how God turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground---and as it follows in the 34th verse, " he "turneth a fruitful land into barrenness for the " wickedness of them that dwell therein." This scripture is now fulfilled literally, as well as spiritually. The holy land has been as remarkable for its fruitfulness, as it is now for its barrenness: for it was once the most fruitful country in the world. The facred writers mention the particular bleffings with which it was enriched, Moses speaks of it in these words: "The country " which thou goest to possess is a land which the " Lord thy God careth for, the eyes of the Lord " thy God are always upon it, from the beginning

" of the year, even unto the end of the year; and " therefore it is a good land, a land of brooks of " water, of fountains, and depths that fpring " out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and " barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pome-" granates, a land of olive oil, and honey, a land " wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarce-" nefs, thou shalt not lack any thing in it." And it fully answered this description. It was once dreffed, and cultivated, and flourished, like a fruitful vineyard; but at present it lays desolate and wafte. The vineyard of the Lord of hofts was the house of Ifrael, and because after all his cultivation they brought forth no fruit, therefore he declares, " I will take away the hedge there-" of, and it shall be eaten up, and break down " the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, " And I will lay it waste, it shall not be pruned " nor digged, but there shall come up briars and " thorns; I will also command the clouds that " they rain no more upon it." (Ifaiah v. 5, 6.) This prophecy is now fulfilled. Judea is one entire wilderness, over-run with briars and thorns, as historians relate, and modern travellers testify. And the fruitful land was turned into barrenness for the wickedness of them who dwelt therein. Wickedness was the cause of its desolation. The Prophets had foretold them of their utter extirpation from the promifed land, if they should reject the Messiah when he came, And he came

to his own, but his own received him not; they opposed, blasphemed, and crucified him, and therefore according to his own predictions they were cut off, and dispersed over the face of the earth, and the fruitfulness of their country was taken from it, and given to the Gentiles, as it follows in the 35th verfe, " he turneth the wilderness into " a standing water, and dry ground into water-" fprings." The heathen nations gladly received Jefus for their Saviour and their God, and therefore their wilderness was turned into a standing water, and their dry ground into water-springs; and this happened, when the spirit was poured upon them from on high: for then the wilderness became a fruitful field, and the desert rejoiced and bloffomed like the rofe, it bloffomed abundantly, and rejoiced even with joy and finging. And he enriched the heathens thus abundantly with the streams of divine grace, after he had made them thirsty, and had disposed them to receive the water of life with thankfulnefs: " for when the poor and needy feek water " and there is none, and their tongue faileth for "thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of " Ifrael will not forfake them, I will pour water " upon him that is thirsty, and sloods upon the " dry ground-I will pour my Spirit upon thy " feed, and my bleffing upon thine offspring, If and they shall spring up as among the grafs, " as willows by the water courfes." The prophet

phet Isaiah is full of these images; he frequently compares the heathens, before they received the gospel, to a desolate wilderness, but after they embraced it, to a cultivated garden, enriched with beautiful flowers, and useful fruits, covered at first with the most fragrant blossoms, and afterwards abounding with the richest products, and it received all its fruitfulness from the rain and dew of heaven. The grace of the holy Spirit was the cause of their flourishing and bringing forth fruit under the gospel. His gracious operation is as necessary in the spiritual world, as the genial influences of warm showers are in the natural. He does the same in grace, which they do in vegetation.

The scripture teaches us to take our ideas of his operation from this image, and it is very familiar and well understood. You all know what are the effects of foft gentle rain: you have feen it cover the earth in a short time with a most agreeable verdure, after it had been parched and burnt up with a long drought. You have feen what plentiful harvests followed a mild dropping feafon, fo that it might be faid without a figure " the clouds drop fatnefs." And you may fee the influence of the holy Spirit equally fruitful in his province. Look into the early ages of the christian church, and you will fee how he bleffed and enriched the first converts from heathenism; they put forth every bloffom

blossom that is fair and fragrant, and were fruitful also in every good word and work: they had been like barren trees in a wilderness, without leaves, or bloffom, or fruit, but fo foon as they were transplanted into the church, they began to flourish abundantly, and watered with the continual streams of divine grace they brought forth fruit unto eternal life. And thus the wilderness was turned into a flanding water, and the dry ground into water-fprings; verse 36. " and there " he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they " may prepare a city for habitation." And in this fruitful foil he placeth the hungry. They wander no more as they did in the wilderness, they are no more lost and ready to perish; but they here find an abiding city, and are fecurely fettled within the pale of the church. " And "they fow their lands," verse 37. Our blessed Lord has explained these words. The feed he fays is the word—fowing the feed in the lands is fowing the word in the hearts of the hearers. And this was the office of the Apostles, and of the fucceeding ministers of the gospel. Indeed the apostles were most eminent and blessed in this great work: for they carried the good feed into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. They converted whole provinces and kingdoms to the faith, and they went on fowing the word without ceasing, until they had planted it in every wilderness upon the face

of the earth, and had there watered it with the dew of heaven. O that our almighty Lord would raife up in this our day an army of apoftolical ministers, who like their predecessors have the good feed fown abundantly in their own hearts, and are therefore best able to fow it in the hearts of others! and by the fuccess of fuch men in fowing their lands may many "vineyards " be planted." A vineyard is in fcripture the established emblem of the church, where the true vine grows and flourishes. The Psalmist and the wife king apply it in this fense, and the prophet Isaiah puts it beyond doubt in the 5th chapter, where explaining the parable of the vineyard, he fays, " the vineyard of the Lord " of hofts is the house of Israel." And our bleffed Saviour makes this application of the fame parable; indeed the Jews themselves make it: For when he asked them what he should do to those husbandmen, who had injured some, and flain others of the fervants of the Lord of the vineyard, and at last murdered his own fon, they reply, " He will miferably destroy these wicked " men, and will let out his vineyard unto other " husbandmen." Accordingly he let it out to us. When he destroyed the wicked men of the Jewish church, he then let out his vineyard to us Gentiles. The Apostles came and planted churches among us, and the almighty arm of our God has thus far protected them. O may his grace

grace and favour continue, that we, " may bring " forth fruits of increase," as the churches first brought out of the wilderness did. They brought forth all the fair bloffoms of an holy life; and they were not like fome early buds, which are apt to be cut off by cold winds and sharp frosts, but they had grace to withstand the severest fforms of temptation, and both to fet and to ripen their fruit-fruit of increase-growing still in grace-increasing from one degree to anotherand persevering, until they reaped the crown of eternal glory. And thus the last part of the beautiful image in the text was compleated-He bleffed them fo that they are multiplied greatly, and fuffereth not the cattle to decrease. By the particular bleffing of the almighty God and Saviour they multiplied greatly, the Lord adding to the church daily fuch as should be faved. His grace went out along with the first preachers of the gospel, as he still does with all his faithful ministers, and he gave them a fortitude, which no danger could intimidate, and a power of utterance, which the adversary could not withstand. Infomuch, that when the poor fishermen had been toiling all the night, and had taken nothing; yet when the Lord gave the word, and accompanied it with his bleffing, they inclosed a great number of fishes, even enow to fill both the ships, both the ark of the Jewish, and the ark of the Gentile church. Then was 20012 his

his promise fulfilled, " I will make you fishers " of men:" for they caught thousands at once. The first time they let down the net, they took three thousand, and the second time five thoufand. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. And though this be a day of small things; yet the Lord's hand is not shortened. He can still bless us, and make us multiply exceedingly. We see some happy instances of itfufficient to convince us, that if we had more apostolical ministers, who had a fingle eye to the glory of their adorable mafter, and were inflamed with a fervent love to the fouls of men, he would fill blefs our labours abundantly. O almighty Jesus we are here waiting for thy blessing, now bless us; and fince thou hast promised, that the very cattle of thy houshold the church should not decrease, enable us Lord so to increase, that every part of this scripture may be fulfilled to day in this whole congregation. And may his divine grace influence all your hearts, while I am endeavouring to fpeak unto them under the

Second general head, Which was to apply what has been faid.

The words contain a new argument for thankfulness, taken from the loving kindness of our most gracious Redeemer, who found us in the dry barren deserts of heathenism, blind in ignorance, funk in vice, and yet wretched as we were, his

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mercy was moved at the fight of our mifery, and his grace flew to our relief. When the Jewish church rejected him, and perfecuted his Apostles and followers, then he fent the Romans to destroy Upon which we were taken into his love and favour---we poor heathens, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death---we were admitted into his church--watered with his grace--enriched with his bleffings---and protected by his almighty arm unto this very day. And ought we not to be thankful for fuch inestimable and eternal mercies? should we not speak forth the praises of this most loving Redeemer, and endeavour to inspire all the world with gratitude to him? certainly this is a duty most right and equitable, and therefore I will make fome short remarks upon the distinct parts of it in the order they are placed in the text. And

First, The holy Spirit here teaches us what a situation we were in before God turned away the streams of his grace from the Jewish church, and directed them to us. We were in a barren wilderness—barren of every thing spiritual and divine. Although the heathens slourished in arts and sciences, were polite and classical, although they could form the accomplished gentleman, and sinish the character of the good moral man, although they had excellent systems of ethics, and knew all the moral and civil virtues, yet if the word of God be true, they were in a wilderness.

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The most refined classical scholars with all their knowledge were in a vast desert: for they knew not Jesus Christ. And without him the most polished genius is no nearer falvation, than the most barbarous favage; because without him they neither know the way to heaven, nor if known can they take one step in it. There was a total ignorance among them concerning the divine nature, and concerning the atonement for fin. And our ancestors in this island were funk as low in ignorance and vice as any of the heathens. They were in a wilderness, where no faving truth grew; but superstition and idolatry flourished. That we are not still in this situation. is entirely owing to the free mercy of our bleffed Redeemer, who fent the streams of his grace into our barren hearts. This is the

Second point remarkable in the text. The Pfalmist says, he sent waters into the wilderness to change its nature, i. e. he sent his grace into our hearts to change their nature, to shew them their dead and barren state, to make them sensible of it, distressed under it, and then cry to him for deliverance. And when grace has thus far disposed the heart aright, and it can pray for more grace, then will our Lord enrich it with abundant streams: for he is always disposed to give in the measure we are disposed to receive; and if we hunger and thirst for much, he has promised that we shall be filled.

. There is no doctrine of christianity more opposed than this, nor any at present more ridiculed. And until men desire to have their barren hearts changed, it must sound strange to them, to talk of the necessity of doing, what they have no defire to do. They have found nothing of this barrenness in their own fouls, they do not believe what we fay of it, and therefore it appears to them like talking of a fixth fense. But the more insensible they are, the greater is their danger. And if there be any of you in this state, thus dozing and sleeping away your lives in carnal fecurity, be affured that you are yet in the wilderness, and the less you see it, the more barren you are. If you fee not your hearts covered with fin and defolation, Oh! what blindness, what infatuation has seized you! for until you fee your natural barrenness, you will find no want of grace to amend and enrich the foil, and without grace nothing can grow. It is equally necessary towards changing and reforming the foul, as water is to change and reform the defolate wilderness. And as in its hot dry fand no vegetable can grow without moisture, fo in your barren hearts no good thing can grow without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: " for without me, fays he, ye can do nothing." And therefore, my brethren, if you refuse to believe this doctrine, you must act against the evidence of your fenses. And it will greatly increase

crease your condemnation, that the scriptures have set in so clear a light the necessity of grace, and yet you would not be convinced, but would still obstinately live and perish in your barren state, unsruitful, and dead to every good word and work. May God shew you, since argument cannot, your sinfulness and guilt. O that his blessed Spirit would now let you see your own hearts, that there may be raised in them a strong crying for grace. And if he does bring you to desire it, the love of our blessed God, who has it to give, cannot withhold it: he will bless and enrich you to such a degree, that you shall bring forth fruits of increase. This is the

Third doctrinal point in the text. The streams of divine grace were therefore fent into the wildernefs, that its nature might be changed, and might bring forth fruits of increase. And into whatever heart grace enters, it makes an entire change and reformation. A wilderness improved into a regular and beautiful garden is not fo great a change: for grace makes the man a new creature. The dead faculties of his foul revive--the barren grow and shoot forth---the understanding bears the fairest blossoms, and the will and affections ripen and perfect the sweetest fruit. Under the genial influence of grace the whole man is, like a tree planted by the water-fide, always green and flourishing, that will bring forth its fruit in due feason. And whatever fruit is brought

brought to maturity, by the mild and gentle operation of this divine agent, will be acceptable to God the Father. Good works put forth and perfected by grace, are well pleasing to him. When grace has changed our barren hearts and reformed them, by justifying us through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, then are we enabled to proceed in the work of fanctification; but not before: because an unjust person cannot bring forth justifying fruit, no more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit. Our perfons must be just and right before our works can be, and the scripture is positive, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works belong to a new creation, and before we can do them, we must be created anew--we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and be grafted into him by the living principle of grace, and draw our nourishment from him as much as a branch does from its stock, before we can bear the fruit of any one good work. This is scripture. This is the doctrine of our church. And whatever some proud felf righteous pharifees may fancy, this is the doctrine of philosophy and nature. We have fensible demonstration of it. Take a branch off from the stock on which it grew, and let it lie in the open air, what will it produce? you fee it withers and dies. If any man be cut off from Christ, the stock upon which we must all grow, or perish for ever, what will he

he produce? hear our Lord's judgment. " the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it " abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye " abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the " branches. He that abideth in me and I in " him, the fame bringeth forth much fruit: for " without me, ye can do nothing." This is the determination of our infallible God, and if you refuse to submit to it, after it has been confirmed by our church, and indeed by the whole Chriftian church, and by matter of fact, and fenfible demonstration, if all this evidence cannot convince you, what will you object to the experience of all living christians, who declare with one voice--" Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, " but unto thy free grace be all the praise." This is the language of every true believer, who confesses, that he cannot so much as think a good thought, without the influence of the holy Spirit: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. If this still cannot convince you, may that grace which you oppose work upon your hearts, and convince you effectually; may the giver of all grace shew you your barrenness without it, and dispose you to seek, until you find a thorough change and reformation; and then you will join your grateful hearts with ours, in returning praise and thanks to our God, who has fo bleffed us with his grace, as to enable us to bring forth fruits of increase:

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And this is the fourth and last remark, which belongs to believers, who know by happy experience the truth of the scripture, which we have been confidering: for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ has brought them out of the wilderness, changed their barrenness by his grace, planted them in his church, watered them with the dew of heaven, and enriched them with all the fweet fruits of an holy life. In you, my christian brethren, this scripture is fulfilled. And therefore you cannot but be thankful. To our dearest Redeemer you offer up your praises with joy and delight. When you confider what wonders Jesus hath done for your falvation, you cannot be filent in his praise; but big with a lively sense of the numerous and eternal bleffings of his free grace, you fpeak of him with the highest strains of gratitude, and yet you find you cannot put forth all his praife. You are unable to declare in words, what your hearts feel, and therefore you let your lives speak forth his praise, as well as your lips. O may his bleffed Spirit keep you always in this thankful temper! and may our gracious and most adorable Jesus increase daily the number of the thankful! may his grace change and reform the wilderness of finners hearts, that the good feed of the word may be fown in them, and they may grow and flourish in the vineyard of the Lord's church, there bringing forth abundantly the fruits of increase! O almighty

almighty Saviour, if there be any in this congregation still in the wilderness, now bring them out of it; now water their hearts with the plentiful streams of thy grace, and grant, most loving God, that some—O if it be but one soul, may be added this day to thy little flock, that sinding thy blessing and thy power present among us, we may go on multiplying exceedingly, until the earth be full of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the waters cover the sea: and may all redound to the glory of God the Father, and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worship and adore now and for ever. Amen.

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Again they are minished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way. Yet setteth be the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a stock.

WE left the redeemed of the Lord in the most flourishing situation. After they had been brought out of the wilderness, and delivered from the pit, and healed of their infirmities, and faved from the storms of vice, they were placed under the tender care of their most loving Redeemer. And upon the rejection of the Jewith church, he fent into the wilderness the abundant streams of his grace, and there he planted the Gentile church, watering it with his good Spirit, and cherishing it with the genial warmth of the light of the: by whose influence it grew and spread, and was fo enriched and bleffed, that it multiplied exceedingly, and became like a well-cultivated and fertile country, where they fow their lands and plant vine-yards, which yield them fruits of increase, some an hundred fold, some fixty

fixty fold, and some thirty fold. And this experience of their Redeemer's love is certainly sufficient to make every one of them thankful, and to excite in their hearts the warmest sentiments of praise and gratitude.

In the words which I have read we have a new motive for thankfulness, taken from the decline and decay of the christian church. Its fruitfulness is now turned into barrenness. The fame country which you faw before adorned with the fweetest blossoms, and bringing forth the richest fruits, covered all over with plenty, is now degenerated again into a wilderness. Nothing grows in it but thorns and thiftles, the fruits of the curse. This is a melancholy change of the church, and it should move us greatly to fee it fall back again into the fame defolate and wretched state, from which it had been raised. But it has been the invariable rule of the Redeemer's providence. He waters the church with his grace, and bleffes it with the light of his fruitful rays fo long as men will receive their kind influence. But when they reject them, either by refusing to make any use of them, or by perverting them to a wrong use, then he withholds his bleffings. He withdraws his grace and the light of his countenance, upon which the fame darkness and deadness ensue in the church, as would be in the world, if the fun were to withdraw his comfortable light and heat, and to arife

arise no more with his reviving beams upon the earth. Thus he turned the fruitful land of the Tewish church into a wilderness for the wickednefs of them who dwelled therein. And he transferred their fruitfulness to the wilderness of the Gentiles. And again he turns our fruitful country into a wilderness for the wickedness of them, who dwell in it. He began to fulfil this scripture by removing the grace and light of the gospel from the seven churches in Asia, and he has left us in his treatment of them a terrible example of his just vengeance upon every wicked infidel church. And he has fince taken vengeance upon feveral other churches. When they refused to walk by the light of his gospel, he then removed the candlestick from them: and deprived of his light, they could produce nothing but the works of darkness, and would certainly be fentenced to that outward darknefs, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever. Our church has long refused to walk by the light of the gospel; God grant our candeflick may not be entirely removed! we do indeed deferve it. Our crying national fins, and our open infolent infidelity call aloud for judgment. O! what mercy must dwell in his breast, who hears daily multitude of traitors plotting the destruction of his divinity, and yet after repeated acts of treason, for any one of which against the king's person they would have been justly

justly put to death, nevertheless spares them, and withholds the deferved punishment? but although he be a God of mercy, yet his Spirit may be grieved, and his long-fuffering may be wearied out. Remember how he destroyed the feven churches, and behold in what a wilderness they now lay, and we shall perish after their example, unless we repent. And I hope the confideration of the scripture now before us may by his blefling be the means of perfuading those among you, who are his enemies, now to fue to him for pardon, and to confirm those who have placed their whole trust and confidence in his merits. As to the former, their dreadful fituation is described in these words, "again they " are diminished and brought low, through op-" pression, affliction, and forrow, &c." And as to the latter, they have a fweet promife of his loving protection, even in the greatest corruption of the church. "Yet fetteth he the poor " humble christian on high from affliction, and " maketh him families like a flock." While the rest of the world sits in darkness and in the shadow of death, the people of God have light in all their dwellings. While others are vifited with his plagues and judgments, he fets his own people on high, out of the reach of affliction, and in the worst of times he watches over them with the care of the most tender shepherd, and makes them families like a flock. And thefe

are the persons here called upon to be thankful, and if they after such mercies should be silent, the very stones would cry out, and call them ungrateful.

Let us then meditate upon these interesting words.

First, By considering their sense and meaning, and

Secondly. By applying the doctrine contained in them to our fpiritual use and improvement.

And may the bleffed Spirit go along with us, and enable us to reap all the profit from this scripture, which he intended for the faithful by recording it! let us then enquire under his guidance by what means the church, which we faw before flourishing and fruitful, should now become a defolate wilderness: for the same people, who had been in the wilderness, and were brought out of it, and placed in the fruitful garden of the church, are again diminished and brought as low, as they were at first. They decrease in number, and are depressed in condition. They who multiplied exceedingly, are again diminished, and they, who were high in every respect, are brought low. The faithful are diminished from among the children of men. Oh dreadful change! to be turned from fruitfulness into barrenness-from a flourishing church into a desolate wilderness-from being cherished with the comfortable rays of divine light, and watered

watered with the fertile dew of heaven, now to be deprived of both, are the greatest calamities which can befal a people in this world. To be thus driven into the wilderness again, is worse than to have been in it at first: because after God had visited them with the grace of his gofpel, and has now withdrawn himself in displeafure, there is no reason to think, that he will return in mercy to a people, who have abused his grace and infulted his gospel: after he has long waited to reclaim them, and they still reject the offers of his pardoning love, and fland out against all his intreaties, obstinately rebellious, then it will be but just and equitable, if he fuffer them to be again diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and forrow. These three are the causes of the decay of the christian church, and they contain a short history of that mystery of iniquity, which now worketh in the children of disobedience. The first cause is the oppressor, the second is the evil of fin into which he brings them, the third is the evil of forrow and mifery. And it is impossible that any church or fociety should flourish, which is under the vile bondage of the cruel oppressor and fin and mifery. Under these tyrants it must be diminished and brought low.

The first we render oppression, but as there must be an agent to perform the action, I therefore choose to give him his term of office, and

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to call him the oppressor. Such an one was Pharoah, who oppressed the children of God, and by his hard bondage tried to diminish them and to bring them low: and he holds forth to us in his manner of treating the Israelites a lively portraiture of a more cruel oppressor, who is a declared enemy to all the people of God, and who has been trying to murder them from the beginning. The oppression of this great adverfary was represented in Pharoah's bondage: for it was by his infligation that Pharoah was fuch a tyrant over the bodies of the Ifraelites, as he is over the fouls of all his deluded followers. So that the oppressor is a just and expressive title of the great tyrant the devil. Is not he the oppressor of God's people, who brought us all into flavery by the original transgression, and who leaves no temptation untried to keep us his flaves? although he deals in nothing but lies, and murder, yet he keeps the multitude under his infernal bondage, and oppresses them with the most heavy yoke of fin and mifery. And when they begin to be uneasy, and to be galled with the yoke, he tempts and deceives them on with lies, uses all his cunning wiles, and lays every bewitching fnare for their destruction. And although they are affured, that he has no wages to give them, but death temporal and eternal, yet he deludes and leads them on, until he get them fast bound with the chains of fin and mifery. And is he

not an oppressor? Is not such a lawless tyrant, who has an abfolute dominion over finners, and who exercises it with hellish malice, is not he the great oppressor? and so far as his tyranny reaches, the church must be diminished and brought low. He keeps it under by means of evil, which is the fecond cause of its decline. We render the word affliction, but it fignifies evil, and properly the evil of fin, the evils of affliction and mifery which follow fin are expressed in the third cause of the church's decay. The great oppressor overthrows the most flourishing church by fin. This is the fuccessful battery he raifes against it, by which he first gained, and still keeps his dominion: for fin cuts off all the fupplies of grace, which the foul might receive from heaven, strips it of its armour, and leaves it quite naked and defenceless against the oppressor's stratagems. And a course of sin reconciles men to it, and although they know it must end in their eternal destruction, yet they never feek, nay they are offended, when we press them to feek, that divine grace, which alone can fet them free. And is it not the strongest of all delufions, that the oppreffor should make men choose eternal destruction? and should force them to work and labour for it, to take more pains to attain a place in hell, than are necessary to gain heaven? what bondage can be harder? must it not wear them down and bring them Vor. IV. low?

low? for fin is the cause of all evil, and that which subjects us to all evil-evil of all kinds, certainly must be the vilest oppression. And it is impossible, that any church should be in a flourishing condition, which is under the bondage of fatan and fin, and thereby fubject to forrow, which is the third cause of the decay of the christian church. The word forrow includes all the evil effects of fin upon the body and the foul, in time and to eternity: for no good can come wherever fin is. The prophet Isaiah gives the reason (lix. 1, 2.) "Behold the Lord's hand " is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither " his ear heavy, that it cannot hear, but your " iniquities have feparated between you and " your God, and your fins have hid his face from " you, that he will not hear." Evil is the cause of God's withholding good: " for your iniqui-" ties, fays he, have turned away these things, " and your fins have withholden good things " from you." And when the good things, which God has to give, are withholden, what can the finner find, but mifery and forrow? and must not misery and forrow wear him down and bring him low? will they not affect his foul, as fickness does his body, bringing it first down to the grave, and then to the lowest place of the infernal pit! and thus the church decays. By these three causes it declines. Christ made it flourish—the oppressor makes it diminish. Grace rendered

rendered it fruitful-fin renders it defolate. Through Christ and his grace it was happy-by the oppressor and sin it is miserable. And it is one of the strongest proofs and evidences of its present low estate, that the offices of the church, which were formerly respectable, are now become contemptible-" He poureth contempt " upon princes."-The head of the church fulfils his promise-" them that honour me, I will " honour, but they that despise me shall be " lightly esteemed." Be their rank and station ever fo great, yet if they despife me and my laws, I will make them despicable; their highest honours shall not keep them from the lowest contempt, but shall expose them the more to it, and bring it upon them the fooner: for they were therefore raifed to be princes, that they might have it in their power to prevent the decline of the church. Their great offices gave them authority, and their great revenues gave them interest, which they ought to have employed for the honour of their mafter; but as they fuffered him to become contemptible, he therefore poured contempt upon them. " The " priests lips, fays God in the Prophet Mala-" chi, should preserve knowledge, and they " should feek the law at his mouth: for he is " the messenger of the Lord of hosts: but ye " have departed out of the way, ye have caused " many to stumble at the law, therefore have I N 2 " alfo

" also made you contemptible and base before " all the people:" fo long as the priests lips preferve knowledge, he is respectable. So long as he has a zeal for his mafter's honour, he is in high esteem. But when he forgets whose fervant he is, and purfues any one thing in preference to the falvation of men's fouls, then God fuffers him to fall in the opinion and esteem of mankind: for his fovereign Lord and mafter poureth contempt upon him, and " caufeth him to " wander in the wilderness where there is no " way." He, who should teach others the right way, wanders from it, and even the princes are turned into the wilderness, where the gospel at first found them. And when the shepherds are thus lost and bewildered, what must become of their poor flocks? can the teachers shew the sheep how to keep out of that wilderness, into which they themselves are fallen? how should it be that the blind should lead the blind, and yet neither of them should go astray? doubtless the sheep must be unhappy, which have a blind shepherd over them: for the wolf may prey upon them unmolested, whenever he pleases, and may devour and disperse the whole flock.

This is a faithful account of the general decay of the christian church. Sad experience proves the truth of it. The once flourishing church is now turned into a wilderness. We see it. The whole

whole face of christendom, compared to its former fruitfulness, is now a defert. The light of the gospel is almost extinguished for the wickedness of those men, who take upon them the name of christianity, but deny the power of it: for the European churches, protestant, and roman, are already diminished and brought low by the great oppressor, and by sin, and by miserythey are fo low, that the princes have loft the respect due to their high offices, and are become contemptible, and are now got into that very wilderness, from whence the gospel delivered them. In these times of general corruption, the Redeemer might in justice take away our candleflick, as he has done from other churches. But here is the fubject of praise and thanksgiving, that he still continues the light of the gospel to us. He is infinitely merciful to them, who trust in him, and be they ever fo few, ever fo poor and mean, yet he has given them a most sweet and comfortable promife, that when he comes to vifit a wicked infidel church, he will watch over them with the care of the most tender shepherd, and they shall lack nothing-Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor—the poor in fpirit--the humble christian he fetteth on high. He will exalt them of low degree, according to his invariable rule, he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. " And he will make them families like a flock"---no flock can be more fafe

fafe within the fold, than they shall be--regarded by his infinite love, watched over by his all-feeing eye, and defended by his almighty arm, they shall be set on high out of the reach of danger. Though they be few, yet they are as dear to their God as the apple of his eye. Though the world despise them, yet the Lord Jesus loves them. Though they be the fcorn and ridicule of an infidel age, yet he esteems them more than his own life, for he shed his blood upon the cross to save them. Though they be the off-scouring of the earth, yet they are the riches of heaven. And when their Lord comes again in all his glory, he will take them into his family, and will admit them into the eternal joys of his heavenly kingdom. How happy then must these christians be, who are thus bleffed in those worst times of the church? and O how thankful should they be, that they were not carried away with the torrent of vice and infidelity! The more wicked the age is, the more are they indebted to the grace of their God, which kept them from the prevailing corruption. And feeing nothing but open profaneness around them, how can they refrain from the praises of their dearest Lord, who preserved them from it? certainly they cannot avoid giving him thanks for this great bleffing, while their hearts feel it; and they will do all that lays in their power to make others partake of the fame bleffing, that they may join with

with us in the same thanks; O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for the wonders that he hath done for the redemption of men.

This is I think the fense and meaning of the text. And it is a very awakening scripture, and ought to rouse up your particular attention: for it offers to your consideration a most interesting truth, viz. that the christian church would decline from its flourishing fruitful state, and degenerate again into the wilderness, from whence the Redeemer had taken it. And has this fcripture been fulfilled? has the christian church been, or is it at prefent in a wilderness? let us confider these points under the second general head, and endeavour to improve them to our spiritual use and benefit. And first the flourishing church was to be diminished and brought low by the cruel oppressor, and by sin, and by misery. And God knows it is diminished and brought low indeed, fo very low, that it is of the Lord's mercy we are not confumed. And I hope his goodness in sparing us may be the means of converting some, and confirming others; if we take a short view of our present unhappy state, with respect to immorality and infidelity, and confider how little we deferved to be spared.

As to morals, our people are entirely corrupt.

They are beyond the example of former ages,

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dissolute and dishonest, insomuch that his majesty has more than once recommended it to the parliament to try to put a stop to the spreading of immorality. But nothing has been done. Nay the want of morals is fo evident and glaring, that even the teachers of dry morality begin to find it, and have lately complained in public, that after all their moral preaching for near an hundred years, the people are not in the least more moral. And is it not time then to have done with mere morality, fince we have had fo much preaching of it, that now we have no morality left? this moral preaching has made our people fo immoral, that they are got to a pitch of wickedness beyond what the very heathens ever attained: for to boast of having no virtue or honesty, to make it a matter of merit to be able to act upon no principle, and to be guided by nothing but interest, these are the peculiar characteristics of the present age. And when men thus avow open and barefaced corruption, and, throwing off the very mask of honesty, dare appear publickly the rotten advocates for vice, then certainly the church can never be diminished and brought lower, as to morals. And it might reasonably be expected, that the common people would be thus immoral, fince the great have fet them the example, and have entirely cast off christianity. Men of rank and politeness are become too refined and delicate in their

their notions to believe in Jesus Christ. And they have taken away all necessity of believing in him by utterly exploding his divinity: and yet they keep up the name of christianity, which is the most stupid and idolatrous religion that was ever invented, if the author of it be not the true God. It rests entirely upon the divinity of Christ: this is its foundation. Nothing can stand without it. But where shall we find great and learned men, who believe that Jesus Christ is felf-existent, and equal with the father in every perfection and attribute? publickly from the press, privately in conversation, you hear this fundamental doctrine of christianity ridiculed and infulted; and the difbelief has spread, and poisoned all orders and degrees of men, infomuch that we have focieties erected upon the principle of blasphemy, with liberty of free debate, as they call it, i. e. with liberty to blafpheme the Godhead of Jesus Christ. And what is the most melancholy point of all, the church and ftate look on unconcerned, while that God, whose fervants they are, is treated with more infolent blasphemy in this city, than the very Jews offered to him at his crucifixion. And are these things really so? do immorality and infidelity flourish thus abundantly among us? If they do, immorality will foon pull down our church, and infidelity will dig up the very foundations of it, and then certainly it will be diminished and brought low. God grant it may not fall lower than it is, but that the few names which are left in it may be kept from falling, and others may daily be added to them. And this we pray for the more earneftly, that Christ may not pour contempt upon princes, which is the fecond remark.

The church must be fallen very low, when its princes are become contemptible: for they were raised to great dignity, that they might stop the torrent of profaneness and unbelief. Their honours and revenues were to give them weight and influence in the support of their master's caufe, and when it was finking and like to fall into difgrace, it was certainly their interest then to maintain it with all their might, because if it fell, their difgrace would not be long after it. But they fat still and quiet, enjoying themselves, warm and fnug in their opulent stations, while their master was wounded with immorality, and crucified afresh by unbelief. Although they eat of his bread, yet they faw him robbed of his divine glory, and neither used their tongues nor their pens in his defence, therefore justly did he pour contempt upon fuch princes. He made them base and mean in the eyes of the people. He took away the respect due to their high offices, and because they refused to defend his divine honour, though they were well paid for it, he therefore made them dishonourable: for them that

that despise me, says our God, whatever their station be, shall be lightly esteemed. And has not this happened? look around christendom, and fee in what church the princes of it are respectable. The bishop of Rome---how low is he funk! and his brethren are fallen fast into difgrace, and the latter part of this verse is fulfilling-" He caufeth them to wander in the wil-" derness where there is no way." Christianity at first found them in a wilderness, and brought them out of it, but now by rejecting Christ they are got into it again: for every church without him is defolation. The finest system of religon, that the wit of man can dress up and delineate, is a wilderness without Christ. Let it be ever fo artfully put together, yet unless it begin and end with him, it is but a mere defert. Lay the foundation of it ever fo deep in the religion of nature, build it up ever fo strong with morality, and adorn it ever fo richly with metaphysics, yet it will be a mere delusive phantom, and of no use but to feed learned pride. As Christ is not in it, furnish it with what you please, it will want all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of which the christian church is full: for it is a building made of God, the foundation of it is laid upon the rock of ages, even upon Jefus Chrift, and in him alone is it built up and fupported. And it shall stand for ever, and be as beautiful as the paradife of God, when all human

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human fystems shall be in ruins: for this shall furvive the slames of the great day, and all its members with Christ at their head shall ascend into the church triumphant with eternal glory. And then they who built a religion without Christ will be turned away into a wilderness indeed—even the wilderness of mere moralists, of the prophane and the insidel, into the place appointed for their eternal reception and torment.

O what a melancholy and terrible state of things is this! and now let us confider, thirdly, how the prospect of it ought to affect us. And whatever our condition be, I think it must affect us greatly: for what grief of heart must it be to every true believer to fee the church which once flourished and multiplied exceedingly, now thus diminished and brought low---to behold the interest of their sovereign Lord lost, and his princes contemptible, how afflicting is the thought! but it is indeed diffressful, when the danger comes nearer to us, and we fee the once fruitful church become a wilderness. Such as the poor ignorant heathens were before Christ came, fuch are we like to be, with this heavy circumstance to add to our misery, that they wished and longed for what we reject. They faw their want of a Saviour, and embraced the good tidings of the gospel with great joy. But we want no Savicur. Natural religion is enough

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for us. And the gospel in any other light, than as a fystem of morality, is absolutely rejected. Thus we are in a worse condition by refusing Christ's offers of mercy, than the poor heathens were; and confequently our wilderness will be more difmal and melancholy than theirs. And how foon our church may be turned into this wilderness God only knows: but of this I am certain, that we deferve it, and we have lately had many loud calls to prepare us for it, and fome of his judgements are still heavy upon us, and unless they lead us to repentance, we must perish. Our destruction is at hand. And while our national fins are crying aloud for vengeance, O let every one of you, who have any interest in the Saviour of the world call aloud unto him for mercy. Let us pray without ceafing for the continuance of his bleffed gospel among us. And let this confideration inflame our hearts, and add zeal to our devotion, that our Lord has promifed to fet the poor christians on high, out of the reach of affliction.

This is the fourth and last remark which belongs only to believers, who are of Christ's family and flock. Let the times be ever so bad and corrupt, they shall be safe---let the times be ever so tempestuous, they shall be set on high out of the reach of the storm. His grace shall keep them from corruption, and his almighty power shall defend them from the distresses of the times. What a sweet promise

promife is this, and how full is it of confolation! God grant you may all tafte the comforts of it, and then you will be thankful indeed. You will fee how gracious a mafter we ferve, and you will have reason to bless his holy name. He will pour down upon you, not contempt, but the riches of his free and unmerited graces: by which you will find, that though the christians be few, and poor and mean, though the church be diminished low, yet the head of it is still the almighty God. Jefus has all power in heaven and earth, and he can give his followers, however the world may despise them, such joys as the world has not to give, and fuch, thanks be to him for it, as the world cannot take away. And these joys he here promises to them who are of his family and flock. And we know that he is faithful who hath promifed. We have experienced his faithfulness. God grant you may all experience it this day, that you may happily begin the new year. And though the weather be dull and cloudy like the state of the church, and the fun has not appeared for many days, O may the day ftar arise, and supply his place in all your hearts with a better light-and then you will go away thankful. And may the mercy of our most adorable Saviour be extended to this whole church and kingdom, as well as to this

congregation. O may he fend out his grace to reform the morals, and his good Spirit to stop

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the infidelity of our people. Bleffed Jesus, spare them a little. Now the sound of the gospel is heard in our land, be pleased to accompany it with thy blefsing; and if they to whose ears it is brought still reject it, then indeed they will deserve destruction. But in thy wrath, O think upon mercy. Spare thy people, O Lord, spare them, and turn not thine once fruitful heritage entirely and finally into the wilderness. Hear us, thou God of love, and answer our prayers to the glory of the Father, and the eternal Spirit—the Trinity in unity—to whom be equal honour, and worship, and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON IX.

PSALM CVII. 42, 43.

The righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

THE holy Spirit finishes this divine hymn with these words. He here sums up the argument, and makes the application. His subject is thanksgiving. The argument used to inspire us with thankfulness is taken from redemption. fince redemption is the greatest bleffing, which the almighty has to bestow upon his creatures, it is confequently the strongest argument for their thankfulness. In order to shew the greatness of the bleffing, the all-wife author of this Pfalm has painted under feveral images the exquisite diftress and misery of mankind, before they were And these images are just and expreffive. They are founded in nature and drawn to the life. And all the redeemed of the Lord have feen their loft estate by fin, which is reprefented under these images, and can bear their testimony to the truth of the representation: they remember when they wandered in the wilderness

out of the way---when they fell into the bondage and prison of fin---and were there fore diseased with its plagues--- and always uneafy and diffurbed, like the troubled fea when it cannot rest, toffed and agitated with the ftorms of vice. The retrospect of these miseries now makes them thankful to their redeemer, who shewed them the way out of the wilderness, by enlightning their understanding, who delivered them from the prison and bondage of fin by justifying them with his most precious blood, and he fent his word and healed them of all their plagues, by fanctifying them with the holy anointing of his good Spirit, and thus he calmed and composed all the storms of vice, which had threatened their destruction. And then he placed them in the fecure haven of the church, where they flourished and multiplied exceedingly. In the early ages of christianity this part of the Psalm was fulfilled, when the first preachers carried the found of the gospel into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. But in these latter days the church is again diminished and brought low by the cruel oppressor, and by sin, and by mifery. These are the three causes of its decay, and they have now reduced it into the fame wretched state, into which it lay before it had the knowledge of redemption. But in these times of reproach and blasphemy the Redeemer has still a small flock left, over whom he Vol. IV. watches

watches with the care and affection of the most tender shepherd. And when he comes to destroy a wicked infidel church, he will fet these poor humble christians on high, out of the reach of affliction, and will make them families like a flock. "The righteous shall fee it and rejoice, " and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso " is wife, and will observe those things, even " they shall understand the loving kindness of " the Lord." God grant that every one of us may be wife to observe those things, and that we may have the true experimental understanding of the loving kindness of the Lord: and then we shall be able to join our thankful hearts and voices with the church militant and triumphant, and to ascribe praise, and honour, and glory to Jesus our redeeming God. And may the eternal Spirit now be present among us, and direct our hearts by his grace, enabling us to finish our meditations upon this Pfalm, with that thankfulness and gratitude, with which he intended it should inspire us. And may this be the happy effect of our confidering.

First, The sense and meaning of the words, which contain the application of the whole Psalm. The righteous shall see it. The word here rendered righteous is not what the scripture ommonly uses to signify righteous or justified persons; but it is another word, and conveys another idea. It signifies to direct, to set right; and the righte-

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ous here mentioned are they who are directed in the right way, and walk, as Enoch did, with God in his way, and not in the way of the world. And these shall see the goodness and mercy of God's dealings with the fallen race of men. They shall have eyes to see the ways of his providence. The fame grace, which fet them right, will manifest to them the reasonableness of the plan of redemption. They shall fee and admire, and be thankful for, the wonders of his redeeming love, which are recorded in this divine hymn. While they read it, their own hearts will bear testimony to its truth; for it is a lively picture of their own state and condition. They well remember the time, when fin misled them, held them in bondage, and fubjected them to all its difeases and storms: but so soon as they had a deep fense of their misery, and were disposed to feek the Redeemer's mercy, he was at hand, a God to fave. When they cried unto the Lord Jefus in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distresses, and gave them a free and full redemption. Finding all this fulfilled in their own fouls, have they not great reason to rejoice? the righteous shall see it, and rejoice. It shall be to them a matter of folid lafting joy; not like the crackling of thorns under a pot-a flashy transitory joy, which arises from a light vain mind, and which the world can give and take away; but the christian joy is the fruit of the spirit, 0 2

fpirit, produced by his gracious working upon the heart, shewing it the dangers which it has escaped, and the happy state into which it is brought, from whence fprings what the fcripture calls joy in the holy Ghost: because it is entirely his gift. Nothing but his grace can enable finners to rejoice in the Lord always, which we find they can: for this is the happy state of every pardoned finner, that he can rejoice in God; fo foon as he is admitted into Christ's kingdom, he is filled with peace and joy in the holy Ghoft. The fense of Christ's redeeming love administers to him joy unspeakable and full of glory: as he told his apostles, "Ye " shall be forrowful, but your forrow shall be " turned into joy, and your heart shall rejoice, " and your joy no man taketh from you." Every believer has found the truth of this fcripture. After they had feen their loft estate by nature, and their fouls were filled with anguish and bitterness at the fight of their guilt and misery, they cried unto the Lord Jesus for deliverance, and he came. His infinite love brought him with hafte to fave them, and he turned their forrow into joy, giving them reason to rejoice with a gladness of heart, which no man can take from them. O! may the love of the almighty Jesus bestow this joy upon every one of you, and he will not withhold it from you, if you feek it. If you can but defire it, you will find h m

him more ready to give, than you are to ask it. He shed his blood to purchase it for you; he bought it with an inestimable price, and the fame love which disposed him to die, rather than you should be without this joy, still disposes him to bestow it. Go therefore to the throne of his grace. Ask, and ye shall have. And will you not go to him for it? will you not receive it upon these easy terms? have you no desire to attain that joy, which Christ alone can give? no desire to be pardoned, to be made just and holy, and to be filled with the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, and peace? if any of you are in this wretched condition, stop-reflect a momentand confider, what enemies you are to your own enjoyments, for you cannot live without joy. And what is your conftant subject of rejoicing? if it be any thing in this world it is imperfect in its kind. You know it by experience. And it endures but a short time, and then it perishes, and you with it. And will you prefer this empty destructive joy, to that fulness and perfection of joy, which Jesus Christ has to give? Be ye affured, there is no true cause of rejoicing, but in him; and nothing that deferves the name of joy, but in the knowledge of what he hath done for our fouls. And would to God I could inform you perfectly of this knowledge: for if you had clear ideas of it, you could not avoid feeking and praying for it; but it is indeed beyond description,

description. Joy in the holy Ghost is an earnest and a foretaste of heaven. O! may you seek until you find it, and may the bleffed Spirit bring you into the happy number of the righteous, who fee the wonders which the Redeemer has done for their falvation, and therefore rejoice. And when their joy is full, then all iniquity shall ftop her mouth: the ridiculer and the blafphemer shall be filent. They shall be struck dumb, and not able to open their mouths against the Lord and against his Christ. They will no longer be able to object to that gracious plan of redemption, by which our God decreed to bring many fons unto glory: but all iniquity-allwithout exception-every infidel champion, every treasonable society, every congregation of rebels shall stop their mouths. Lord, when are we to fee this much-defired day! O when shall the blasphemers of Jesus be filent! when shall it be no longer faid, that God our Saviour is not felf-existent, and equal in every perfection and attribute with the Father? when shall the infidel cease to tread under foot our most adorable God, and the wicked cease to crucify him afresh? not I fear till the end: for while there are evil men, there will be railing and blafphemy. But there will be a day, when iniquity shall stop her mouth, and it is not far off. When our Lord shall come again in all his glory, then they shall look upon him whom they

have

have pierced, and they shall see that the crucified Jesus is a God indeed; the lustre of his divine glory, infinitely beyond the brightness of the sun, will be to them insufferable, and confounded, abashed, silenced, they shall lay their hands upon their mouths. And when he pronounces the dreadful sentence upon them, never, never, to be reversed, "go ye cursed into "everlasting sire, prepared for the devil and his angels," then they shall not have one word to object—all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Until this great day come, it is every christian's part and duty to defend his Redeemer's cause: but it is more particularly incumbent upon us, who have taken his commission and are his ministers, to exert ourselves in his defence. Actuated by zeal for his honour, and by love to these precious souls, for whom he died, we should be unwearied in our labours. Every talent and gift, with which we are bleffed, ought to be devoted to the promoting of his interest, and we should strive to bring as many as we possibly can over to it. And every perfon we gain is stopping one of the tongues of iniquity. And if we gain but few, yet we may bring fuch arguments in defence of the plan of redemption, that we may filence many. I hope the arguments in this Pfalm will filence fome. If they were well confidered, they would filence all. And therefore we must call upon men and prefs

press them to consider what is here said: for the holy Spirit in the last words requires it of us. "Whoso is wife and will observe those things, " even they shall understand the loving kind-" ness of the Lord." " Whoso is wife," has the true wisdom that is from above, " will ob-" ferve those things," will carefully note and remark what is here faid of the fall and recovery of mankind, of our flate by nature and by grace. True wifdom confifts in observing these two things, what we are in ourselves, and what we are in Christ; in a deep sense of our misery by fin, ffirring us up to feek our remedy in the Redeemer. This is wifdom: And whofoever is thus wife unto falvation " shall understand " the loving kindness of the Lord" shall be able to apply what he understands of it to his own private use and benefit. The verb in the original rendered " shall understand," is, in the conjugation, called Hithpael, which fignifies to act upon itself. Whoever observes those things properly, finds his own interest in them. He makes the understanding of them useful to himfelf. He does not ftudy them as a fcience or theory, but as interesting points in which he is nearly concerned, and which he therefore tries to bring home for his own private advantage. When he hears of the mercies of the Lord Jesus recorded in this Pfalm, he defires to partake of them. When he hears of the great deliverances vouch-

vouchfafed to finful ruined man, he studies to have his own share in them. What is faid of these persons, who wandered out of the way in the wilderness, and fell into the bondage of fin, and were afflicted with its diseases, and troubled like a stormy sea with its continual tempests: all this he knows was his own case, and therefore what follows of their flourishing state after Christ delivered them may be his also, if he cry unto the Lord, as they did, for help. And he never ceases praying and feeking, until the bleffed Jesus bring him to the haven of the church, where he would be. And if he find the church diminished and brought low, he is not discouraged; but relies on the promises of his God, who will fet him on high out of the reach of public calamity, when he comes to deftroy an infidel church. He observes what is faid in this Pfalm concerning those things; and he knows it to be true, by his own experience. And therefore the loving kindness of the Lord here recorded is to him a fubject of exceeding great joy, because he has tasted of it. Whoso is wife will bring his knowledge of this Pfalm home to his own heart, and he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord, he shall be able to apply what he understands to his own benefit, and shall therefore be continually praising the Lord for his goodness, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for the falvation of men.

And here the holy Spirit ends, recommending to us the observation of those things, as the only wifdom, and exhorting us to apply what we understand of them to our own particular benefit, as the only use we can make of them. And if we can but observe and understand, until we find our interest in them, then his defign in recording this Pfalm will be answered, and we shall be thankful indeed: for thankfulness is only expressing with the mouth what the heart feels, and if the heart feels itself entitled to the bleffings of redemption, it will be impossible to restrain the tongue from praising the almighty God and Redeemer of the world. The redeemed foul can no more forbear to praise its Redeemer, than the body can forbear to breathe, for long as there is any life in it.

You may remember, that I fet out at first with a general plan of the whole Pfalm, and I need not here repeat it. You have heard each part explained, and have been shewn how each tends to carry on the general plan. You have feen how regular and beautiful it is altogether; how important the fubject, how ftrong and firiking the arguments. It is indeed a masterly painting of our lost estate by fin, which is here represented in various lights, the more forcibly to affect us, that finding our diffrefs, and being difposed to cry out for deliverance, we may be the more thankful to the Redeemer, when he comes and DIANA.

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brings us free and full redemption. For this end the holy Spirit inspired the Psalm, and for the fame good purpose we have been considering it. God grant we may not have confidered it in vain. It is a very weighty and folemn scripture, and contains the most powerful motives, which infinite wifdom itfelf could propose, both to convince us of our mifery without a Redeemer, and also of our happiness in him, and these most powerful motives ought certainly to produce the greatest effects, they ought to fill our hearts with gratitude, and to raife us to the highest pitch of thankfulness; but if we have no better dispofitions to be thankful to our bleffed Redeemer, than we have had before we heard these motives, there must be some very bad cause in our own hearts: what it is I will endeavour to find out by applying myfelf, adams of a sint its a randing of w

First, To them who disbelieve the state of the case as it is laid down in this Psalm. The subject is thanksgiving. The motives used to excite in us a thankful temper are taken from the distressed estate of mankind by nature, and from their perfect recovery by grace. And no man can be unthankful, who has seen himself in this lost condition, out of which he was brought by the free grace and mercy of the Redeemer. Such a person I say cannot be unthankful: because while he retains the sense of his former misery, and of his present happiness, his mind is always

always

always in a thankful temper, and he must lose this fense, before he can be indisposed to give thanks and praife to his redeeming God. This is the clear and plain state of the case. And the holy Spirit supposes, that the proper confideration of it would be fufficient to inspire us all with thankfulness: for when he comes to fum up the argument, he fays, " whofo is wife," whofoever has the true wifdom, " will observe " these things," will observe the great points trasted of in this divine composition, and will endeavour to understand them in a practical way, by applying what he knows of them to the state of his own foul. And whenever he is thus wife, and has this right understanding, then he will be full of thanks and praise to the God of his falvation. Now there are men among us, who disbelieve all this, who deny the lost and fallen estate of mankind, and who talk of I know not what fancied dignity and rectitude in poor finful worms; and although they fee the whole face of the earth covered with fin, yet they will not allow that man is finful. And thus they deny the very evidence of their fenses, when it makes against infidelity, and are therefore greater enthusiasts, than mistaken religion ever did produce. A poor creature, who believes without evidence, is indeed an enthuliast; but the infidel, who disbelieves against evidence, is got to the very top of enthusiasm. All deifts

are rank enthulialts, and of the worst kind: because they can refuse to believe their own senses, when they give evidence for christianity. If there be any of them in this place, I must call upon them to observe those things, which are recorded in this Pfalm. Confider, why you disbelieve them. What reason, what motive have you? if you would fubmit to the authority of scripture, it has determined, that we are altogether corrupt and abominable, and that there is none of us righteous, no not one. And if the experience of all ages had any weight with you, it comes in confirmation of the scripture authority. If plain matter of fact could convince, if reason was heard, you could not deny the corruption and depravity of human nature: for nothing is more certain, than that the man lives not, who never finned. And if you fee not that you yourselves are finners, you are in great darkness. The eyes of your understanding are as yet blind. For what elfe can be the caufe, why you should have no eyes to fee those things, which are certain, yea felf-evident to every christian? You have no defire to find the truth of them. I appeal to your own hearts, whether this be not the true cause. It is not want of evidence to convince, but want of defire in you to be convinced. Though the fun shine ever so bright and clear, yet it can give no light to them, who shut their eyes against it. None are more blind, than they who

who will not fee. Nothing is more difficult, than to perfuade a man to believe, what he is unwilling to believe. Reafon and argument are feldom fuccessful against such strong prejudices, especially when these prejudices fall in with our natural corruptions, and flatter our finful pride, and pay their court to the dignity of our bafe nature. In fuch a case something more powerful, than reasoning is necessary. To convince such perfons is a work too great for any agent, but the grace of God; and if after all that has been faid, there are still men among us, who fee not fin and mifery enough in their own hearts to want a Redeemer, may his good spirit open their eyes, before it be too late, and shew them the truth of this Pfalm, and bring the doctrines contained in it home with power to their hearts, that they may find their lost estate by fin, and their perfect redemption through Jesus Christ. And with my fervent prayers for them to our gracious God I conclude, for the present, and turn myfelf in the bidw again blods solved asys on

Second place to them, who believe what the holy Spirit has here recorded, concerning the fall of man, and who defire to experience the truth of what is here faid concerning his recovery. Go on, my beloved brethren; you have fet out well; perfevere in your defires and prayers: for you are not far from the kingdom of heaven: it is God who hath begun a good work in you, let him finish onv

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it. And as the proper means thereto, wait upon God, in all his holy ordinances, and particularly observe those things; remark the great points treated of in this divine hymn: fludy to understand them, and to apply them to your own hearts; labour to find your interest in them, and be affured that God will accompany the devout meditation of this scripture with his grace and bleffing. Whoso is wife will observe those things, fays the holy Spirit, therefore if you would be wife, observe them. Mark, learn, and inwardly digest them. Try to find in them spiritual nourishment and support, and if you confider them with humility and prayer, they will be greatly bleffed unto your fouls. Wait and perfevere in these holy exercises, and in God's own good time you will find reason to join with all his redeemed people, and to declare that he is loving to every man, to you in particular, and that his mercy endureth for ever. And these are the happy persons, to whom I address my

Third and last remark. You, my christian brethren, are prepared to join with me, in offering up our tribute of thanks. You know what the Redeemer has done for your salvation, and you are grateful; but you are not grateful enough; neither can you be. Our most adorable God condescended to do such miracles for your redemption, that he deserves far more thanks than

you can pay. Your best service, what a poor return is it for the riches of his love? and your highest strains of praise, how far do they fall below his infinite deferts? alas! what can we do in the way of return, fince all we have is his free gift, and all we hope for comes from his free grace. The inestimable riches of earth and heaven, while they proclaim the love of Jesus to us, yet prove that we cannot praise him enough for them. And indeed we never praise him so well, as when we firive to do the best we can; but yet find how little it is we can do, how empty and worthless our best praises are. God knows, our prefent adoration and praise in their utmost fervour are very imperfect. And the Redeemer is fo great and infinite, and fo eternal are the bleffings which he has freely conferred upon us, that our praifes must be infinite and eternal, if they rife up to his merit: for eternity itself will acknowledge that Jesus is above all blessing and praise, and therefore we are to praise him for ever. And how then can we rife up to the greatness of his merit in time, fince there is to be no end of giving him thanks; but though our praifes be imperfect, yet our Lord requires them, and we must return him the best we can: and when we know his love, and taste of his mercy, the heart will feel more than the tongue can utter, and then our praifes will be acceptable: and his grace will render them fweet and delightful to us, and

and we shall esteem these moments to be the pleafantest in our lives, which we fpend in giving thanks to the bleffed Jesus, the author of all our joys. And this kind of praise is something like the praifes of heaven. It has their fincerity, but not their perfection: May God enable us to increase in both! O that we could raise our. hearts, and exalt our affections to that heavenly frame, with which the glorified spirits are now praifing the lamb, who fitteth upon the throne. The holy Spirit can tune our hearts to join in harmony with theirs, though in an humbler ftrain; and let us. now feek his gracious influence, and beg of him to blefs thefe lectures upon thankfulness, and to make them the means of rendering every one of us more thankful to our most adorable Redeemer. The means may be weak, but he who is to give them his bleffing is almighty, and if we ask and feek it of him in humble prayer, he will fupply all their defects by his grace. Let us then agree to request him to fend his good Spirit into our hearts, that we may reap all the profit from the confideration of this divine hymn, which he intended it should administer to the faithful. And I know of no words more truly devout and pious, nor more proper wherewith to conclude these lectures, than the general thankfgiving of our church.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy fervants, do give thee most hum-

ble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the bleffings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ: for the means of grace, through him, and for the hope of glory. And we befeech thee, give us that due fense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we may shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee, and the holy Ghoft, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

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SURE FOUNDATION:

TWO

DISCOURSES,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

APRIL 11th, 1756,

IN THE

MORNING AT ST. MARY's,

AND IN THE

AFTERNOON AT ST. PETER's.

Therefore thus faith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, a fure Foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste. Isaiah xxviii. 16.

SURE FOUNDATION

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SURE FOUNDATION.

SERMON I.

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r Cor. iii. 11.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

IN every undertaking it is the principal point to lay and to fecure a good foundation. In temporal concerns, all men fee and acknowledge this truth, and are careful enough to act agreeably to it. The men of business, of pleasure, and of ambition, have each their foundation to build upon, from whence they promise themselves success. The learned also have their data, and first principles in every art and science, which are laid down as a sure foundation, whereon the art or science may be built. The christian in like manner has his foundation. Divinity has its first principles, with this manifest advantage above the arts and sciences, that God hath built

it, and upon one plain simple truth, which is clearly ascertained both in the Old Testament and the New, Jefus Christ being proposed in both as the only foundation of faith and obedience. This one fure foundation is laid, and no other can be laid: " For other foundation can " no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jefus " Christ." What words can be more clear and decifive than these are, and yet the mistakes of men about them are endless, even of men who allow the divine authority of this very passage? The papifts have multiplied the one foundation into a great number, building upon the Virgin Mary, as much as they do upon the ever bleffed God her Saviour, and upon a multitude of fabulous faints. And the Arians and Socinians, the pefts of this age, have been trying to dig up the foundation, and would willingly leave no traces of it remaining. And fome of the reformed churches, which fet out well at first, laying Christ, and Christ alone for the foundation, have fince built upon him, wood, hay, stubble, and fuch like reprobate ftuff, which, when it comes to be, tried in the fire, will be burnt. And the generality of men have no foundation at all, but live. careless and unconcerned about the state of their fouls, never examining whether they are built upon Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, on whom the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. Each of these mistakes

mistakes has at present numerous advocates, some of them have great interest, and others have enjoved a long establishment, and the espousers of each have fomething specious to offer in its defence, which being dreffed up with the ornaments of false learning, and falling in with our own corrupt inclinations, is very apt to feduce us from the foundation of truth. For thefe reasons it will be proper and feasonable to look to the foundation, and to fee whether we stand fecure upon it. In this enquiry, the words of the text will be useful; they are so plain and clear, as to leave no doubt in every honest teachable mind, which is willing to be determined by the authority of the written word, and hears and reads it under the guidance of its allwife inspirer. St. Paul is here reproving his Corinthians for the envying and strife, and divisions, which were among them. He had converted them to the faith, and Apollos had built them up in it, and they had great reason to join together in giving praife and glory to God, who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. But the common enemy of their fouls prevented this defirable effect, by fowing discord among them. He tempted them into a party spirit, and they divided about the gifts and talents of their ministers. One faid that he was of Paul, another that he was of Apollos; and they forgot, that neither is Paul that

that planteth any thing, neither Apollos that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. All the glory of planting and watering, as well as of the increase is God's. For we, says the Apostle, are only labourers together with God. Although by our ministry the good feed was fown in your hearts, yet ye are God's husbandry. Although by our preaching ye were built up in your most holy faith, yet ye are God's building. We could do nothing without his grace: for according to the grace of God, which is given to me as a wife mafter builder I have laid the foundation. This wife mafter builder laid the foundation, when he converted them to christianity, and he cautions every minister of the gospel to take heed how he buildeth thereon, because there was but one foundation on which all doctrines and duties refted-" for other foundation can no man lay, " than that is laid." The foundation is the entire ground-work of religion, upon which every part of it must rest. The whole building is to stand upon it, and therefore it should be laid fecure. Certainly it cannot be too ftrong and firm, which is to support our present and our eternal happiness. Look at this tempestuous world, and behold what rains defcend, what floods come, what winds blow, and beat upon our weak tabernacle, threatening its fall, how can we ftand against these mighty assaults, unless we be founded upon a rock? For our comfort God

God hath laid a foundation, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and therefore we need not doubt of its stability or duration. He laid it first in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and fure, when he purposed before all worlds, to bring many fons unto glory through Jesus Christ. He afterwards revealed his purpose in the written word, and he hath therein laid but one foundation, and there is no other. Mofes and the prophets have laid no other foundation in the Old Testament than what is established throughout the New, which is Jesus Christ, on whom we may fafely build all our hopes of falvation, because he is God and man united in one Christ, who came as our reprefentative, to act and fuffer for us, and thereby to restore us to the happy estate which we had forfeited by the fall. As man he obeyed the divine law to atone for our difobedience, as man he fuffered what we should have suffered for difobeying; but then his obedience and fufferings could never have wrought out perfect righteousness for a guilty race, unless the holy suffering Jesus had been united to the most high God, and God and man had been as intimately united in one Christ, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. The merit of all that he did and fuffered, rests upon his being a divine, as well as a human person. Take away his eternal felfexistent Godhead, and you sink him down into a

mere creature: and then place him ever so high, suppose him to be at the very top of the scale of creatures, yet you make him finite; and being so, cloath him with every grace and perfection short of divine, he could save no person but himself, for it is an adjudged case upon record, that no man can redeem his brother, or pay to God a ransom for him.

The divinity then of Jesus Christ is the foundation on which the whole of our falvation rests: for there is falvation in none other, and if he be not true and very God, there is no falvation in him. Our preaching is vain, and your faith in him is also vain. We are all yet in our fins, for nothing fhort of divine and infinite can fave us from the guilt and power of them. But the scripture has clearly revealed his divine and infinite nature. It has not left us in doubt concerning the power of the fon of man to forgive fins. The Saviour of finners was Jehovah, a person of the self-existent essence; for we are taught by the christian verity to believe, that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons of equal glory and co-eternal majesty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who were pleafed to difplay their attributes and perfections, by fustaining distinct offices in the economy of man's redemption, to whom we therefore owe equal glory and worship, because their love to us in fustaining these offices for our recovery was equal. God the Father was glorified

fied by having honour paid to his holiness and justice. He demanded full and perfect fatisfaction for fin, which God the Son paid by taking upon him the human nature, and therein obeying and fuffering for finners: for which stupendous act of love and condescension, he was seated upon the throne, and had all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and he is now glorified by all the heavenly hoft, angels and archangels, and by the spirits of just men made perfeet, thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, a great multitude whom no man can number. Glory be to his holy name, for that his courts will be filled with fuch an innumerable company, afcribing falvation to our God who fitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And God the Holy Ghoft is glorified for abiding with us, even unto the end of the world, to carry on the work of falvation, for awakening the dead in fin, enlightening them with the light of life, and guiding them in their christian course by his grace, until he bring them unto glory. Thus God the Father demands fatisfaction-God the Son pays it-God the Holy Ghost applies it--but still in these offices the glory is equal, because the persons are equal. If the Son was not equal to the Father, how could he pay him an infinite fatisfaction? If the Holy Ghost was not equal to the Father and the Son, how could he fustain his office, which

which requires an all-wife, all-prefent, and almighty spirit? These distinct offices make no difference or inequality between the persons, as it is well expressed in that form of found words to which we have all subscribed, " In the holy, " bleffed, and glorious Trinity none is afore or " after other, none is greater or less than ano-" ther, but the whole three perfons are co-eter-" nal together and co-equal." Jefus Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and being a truly divine as well as an human person united in one Saviour, in this character every thing he did and fuffered for us must be perfect and complete. Nothing can be wanting to make him a fure foundation. When he obeyed---when he fuffered---when he died--he was paving the fatisfaction demanded by the justice of the Father, who demonstrated his acceptance of it by raising the manhood from the dead. And then the foundation of God was established immoveably. God himself, even God manifested in the flesh, is the foundation that standeth fure. It is neither the blessed virgin, nor the faints and martyrs; it is neither repentance nor good works; neither morality nor natural light, but the one foundation is the Godman, Chrift Jefus. As God, he is almighty: for he created all things, and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. As God manifested in the sless has engaged to use his almighty

mighty power for our falvation. In his obedience and fufferings, death and refurrection, he laid a foundation that can never be shaken, upon which finners may fafely build their hopes of pardon and forgiveness, of righteousness and holiness, of heaven, and eternal glory. And they may build on him with greater fafety, because the scripture throughout sets him forth as the only foundation. He is laid, and other foundation, the apostle fays, can no man lay. There is an utter impossibility of laying any other: because to attempt it, would be opposing the immutable decree of heaven, by which this one foundation was laid in the covenant of grace; it would be opposing God's revealed will, which has established this one foundation in the written word; and it would be opposing the sufficiency of Christ's obedience and sufferings, by which alone we can obtain acceptance with God the Father. Will not these men be found fighting against God, and how then can they succeed, who oppose his covenant, confirmed by his revealed will, and established by his miraculous works? So long as this fcripture stands upon record, it will overthrow all their attempts to lay any other foundation. Will the metaphyfician think of laying his reason and the light of nature? It is written, Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the moralist think of laying a system of ethics, and the

the religion of nature? Jefus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the Arian, Socinian, and other infidels think of being justified without the merits of the God-man? Jefus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. In short, every doctrine and duty stands established upon him. He is the foundation of all: "for other "foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, "which is Jesus Christ."

The scope and design of the words thus in part opened and explained, offer to our consideration the following truths:

First, Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

Secondly, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

Thirdly, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Fourthly, He is the foundation of all present and eternal happiness. And may the Spirit of the Lord Jesus direct our hearts to make a right use of this scripture under the First Particular, which was to prove, That he is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

By faving knowledge I understand all the knowledge which respects the salvation of sinners. And man, in his fallen state, neither has any of this knowledge, nor can he attain it by any means in his own power. His reasoning faculties in their highest resinement could never have

have discovered to him, how he might be pardoned: for when fin cut him off from all communion with the Father of spirits, who is to the foul what the fun is to the body, it then deprived him of all spiritual discernment, and without the light of revelation he is unable to discover those objects, which can only be spiritually discerned. He is blind and ignorant in the things of God, and obstinate too in his ignorance. He is in the dark, and he loves darkness; and being a slave to the prince of the powers of darkness, he is taught to hate the light; and he hates it with a perfect hatred. He flies from it, left his works should be manifest, and their horrid deformity should fill him with shame and painful conviction. While he is in this condition, and every man is in it by nature, the eyes of his understanding have no more perception of any spiritual object, than his bodily eyes would have of material objects, if there was no light to enlighten them. The organ of fight would remain, but then without light it would be of no more use than if it was quite destroyed. The scripture has given us a melancholy account of this spiritual darkness and blindness, and represents it to be so far above the power of nature to remove, that it was one principal end of Christ's coming from heaven to preach recovery of fight to the blind. And to enable him to recover it, the spirit of the Lord' was poured out upon him without measure: for

it required the power of an almighty spirit to cure the obstinate blindness of a finful world, who loved darkness rather than light. Read the first chapter of the Romans, and you will there find, what horrid deeds of darkness were, and always will be the fruits of nature, when left to its own fancied light. The apostle does not scruple to declare of the refined taste of this polite classical people, "that they were become " vain in their imaginations, and their foolish " heart was darkened." The imagination of their finest poets--even Virgil's imagination, St. Paul being judge, was vain. And Tully with his great parts, with his vast reading, and all his attainments, had a foolish heart, St. Paul being judge, and in the things of God was exceeding dark. And this was true of the rest of the heathen world, as well as of the Romans. When St. Paul received his commission from Jesus Christ, it run in these words--- I fend thee to " the Gentiles to open their eyes, and to turn " them from darkness to light." And accordingly we find it the principal fubject of his preaching and writing, to call them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. His Ephefians he cautions iv. 8.) " not to walk as " other Gentiles in the vanity of their mind, " having the understanding darkened, being " alienated from the life of God through the " ignorance that is in them, because of the " blindness

" blindness of their heart." And lest this darkness and blindness should be supposed to take place only in the heathen world, the feripture has expressly declared it is the case of every son of fallen Adam---of whom not one in his natural state can attain to the knowledge of faving truth, " for the natural man receiveth not the things of " the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto " him, neither can he know them, because they " are fpiritually difcerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. And for want of this spiritual discernment, the apostle fays, that the natural man, that is, every man in a state of nature, not only does not, but also cannot, there is an abfolute impossibility that he should, know the things of the spirit of God. Nay, when they are propofed to him, they appear to be foolishness, and he receiveth them not.

But why need I multiply texes in defence of a truth, for which scripture speaks so plain, and matter of fact speaks for itself. It is an undoubted truth, that there was no faving knowledge in the heathen world. We therefore call it heathen, because it wanted this christian knowledge. What discoveries did the classical ages of Greece and Rome make in the doctrines of salvation? Rather, what had they not done to obliterate the scope and intent of the ceremonies, which God had instituted to keep up the knowledge of these doctrines? the very traces of them Vol. IV.

were so entirely lost, that among the numerous altars in the samous university of Athens, there was but one erected to any thing like divinity, and that was to an unknown God. St. Paul made an excellent use of this inscription, taking occasion from it to preach christianity to the Athenians, and assuring them that this God confessedly unknown was Jesus Christ: and if a faith in him, that purifies the heart, and that works in an holy life, be the basis of saving knowledge, then neither Greeks nor Romans had any of it: for in none of their authors do we find the least mention made of the nature, virtue, and efficacy of the purifying faith in Jesus Christ.

And this matter of fact is confirmed by every day's experience. Are we not forced to teach children the first rudiments of letters, and as their minds open, the first rudiments of saving knowledge? is not a christian education every where acknowledged to be necessary, as well to restrain and subdue the headstrong passions of corrupt nature, as to instil the wholesome truths of christian faith and obedience? And are there not in every country, schools and universities sounded for these laudable purposes? And when we leave these places of education, does not every good steward of the mysteries of God still find the necessity of continual study and application to the written word, that he may be able out of

his treasure to bring forth things new and old for his own and his people's inftruction in righteoufness; and these circumstances may convince us, that we are naturally blind and ignorant in the faving truths of the gospel. We know only as much as we are taught. Without the light of revelation, the inhabitants of England would be no wifer in the things of God, than the inhabitants of the deferts of Africa-the fame spiritual darkness would cover both lands, the same grofs darknefs the people. And whether they be polite or favage it makes no difference, until the fun of righteoufness arise to dispel their heavy night of ignorance: for what the fun is to the natural world, fuch is Jesus Christ the sun of righteousness to the spiritual world. The scripture hath fet him forth as the only light of the fpirits of men, from whom all faving knowledge must flow: for he was made unto us wisdom, fays the apostle. In his divine nature wisdom, perfect and infinite wifdom is effentially inherent. He is the all-wife God, in whom are stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which he was pleafed, as our Saviour, to open for our use and to communicate. The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom, from whom by the covenant of grace it was to flow; and ever fince the fall it has been flowing in the richest streams. And from him every finner must be enlightened before he can enter into

the light of life: for he faid of himfelf, " I am " the light of the world;" and he must fulfil his word by enlightening every dark benighted foul, until the number of the elect, the children of light shall be perfected, aed then he will shine for ever in the fulness of glory in the heavenly Jerusalem: for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are faved shall walk in his light for ever and ever. Thus the light has been and always will be the glorious title of the incarnate God. He took this name to denote his gracious office of enlightening our blind and dark understandings. Under this character the prophet Isaiah speaks of him (ix. 2.) "The people " that walked in darkness have seen a great " light, they that dwell in the land of the sha-" dow of death, upon them hath the light " fhined." These words are applied to Christ by an infallible interpreter. St. Matthew makes them relate to Christ's being a light to lighten the Gentiles. And again in the same prophet the Lord faith (xlix. 6.) " It is too little a thing " that thou shouldst be my fervant to raise up " only the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the " preferved of Ifrael, I will also give thee for a " light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be " my falvation to the ends of the earth." Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 47.) apply these words to Christ: he was the true light, the day-spring from

from on high that visited the Gentiles, to give them the knowledge of salvation, for if the eyes of them who sit in darkness and the shadow of death be ever opened, if they see that they have lost the way to heaven, if they desire to walk in it, and are enabled to go on steadfastly unto the end, all this is the work of that divine light, in whom whosoever believeth shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

From these scriptures it is evident, that every man who cometh into the world is by nature dark and blind in the things of God. Sin blinded his eyes, and left him without the least spiritual difcernment. The intellectual faculty indeed is not totally destroyed. The organ of fight is not annihilated. It remains, but not enlightened. It is in the fame state our eyes would be, if the fun, moon, and stars were to withhold their shining, and not one ray of light was left in the creation. If men could live in this grofs darknefs, the organ of fight would not be deftroyed, but it would be quite useless. All things would be invisible, because whatsoever doth make manifest is light. And this is the state of the foul: for the eye of the foul can no more fee without its proper light, than the eye of the body can fee without its proper light. And what the fun is to the body, that is Christ to the foul. He is the light of the world, not of this outward world, which is abundantly supplied from the fountain of created light;

light; but he is the light of the spiritual world, which lay in darkness and the shadow of death, until he arose with healing under his wings, and brought with him from heaven the reviving light of life.

Upon the authority of God's word these truths are established. The evidence for them is clear and full. If our bodily eyes cannot fee without light, it is equally certain, that our spiritual eyes cannot fee without Christ: because both are fpoken of in the same language, and under the fame expressions. And as he is the Lord God omnipotent, he is certainly able to enlighten the darkest foul; and as be is God incarnate, he is engaged to do it. He will use his almighty power, and if he give the word, " Let there be "light," there will be light. Upon the strength of this evidence we must believe, that it is the name, and the office, and the glory of Jefus Christ, to be the light of the faithful through this dark wilderness of fin and forrow.

Convinced of this, there is an important enquiry to be made, without which our conviction will be of no use, and that is, Have we reduced it to practice? Since Christ is the foundation of all saving truth, have we been led to seek it from him, and him only? In our studies of divine learning do we always read the scripture with humility and prayer, desiring in the royal Psalmist's words, which are devout and short, and which

which contain an excellent prayer always to be used before we open a bible, " Lord open thou " mine eyes, that I may fee wondrous things in " thy law." And in our studies of human learning have we taken Christ for a light to guide us and to bless us, that we might attain more understanding than the aged. Rather have we not robbed the eternal light of his name, and office, and glory, by feeking faving truth from the light of nature? If God be true, and the fcriptures which I have read be his word---nature is dark and blind. To talk of the light of fallen nature, and all nature is fallen, is more abfurd than to talk of the darkness of light. There cannot be a more wicked contradiction to God and his word, to experience and matter of fact, than for men professing christianity to talk about the light of finful dark and blind nature: neither can there be a greater infult offered to the incarnate God, than to feek that light which he was made incarnate on purpose to give, from metaphyfics, or any fcience, that pretends to manifest spiritual objects without revelation: neither can there be a greater crime, than to think of feeing and reasoning à priori, because this is God's incommunicable attribute, of which he is fo jealous, that for pretending to it we were all cast out of paradise. In honour then to the God whom we worship, and out of love to our own fouls, let us talk no more of the light of fallen nature:

nature; let us degrade the unnatural science of metaphyfics, and forget all abstracted reasoning; they can give us no light in the things of God, but what is borrowed, and it is fainter than the faintest stars; and were they brighter than they are, yet when the fun arises, his superior lustre hides their pale and glimmering rays. God be praifed, the fun of righteousness has arisen among us in perfect beauty and false science is hiding her head. He shines with his noon-day glory upon this highly-favoured church. Long may he shine unrivalled by any fancied light of fallen nature. And may his brightest beams enlighten this university, that every member of it, guided by his word and spirit, may receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

If it should be enquired, in what manner Christ enlightens the spirits of men, whether it be in some certain regular way, or he has left no sure direction in this case: The answer is, God has established the means of grace for this very purpose, of which his word is the principal: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light:" And when his good spirit accompanies the hearing or reading of the word, then it is indeed a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. Then the word discovers to us the wretched darkness of our natural state, strips reason of all its high and divine titles, and thereby

thereby humbles us before God, and brings us low before his footstool, waiting upon him in all the means of grace, and particularly in prayer, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may fhine into our dark and finful hearts. To expect this light without the use of the instituted means is enthusiasm; and to expect to keep this light, after you once have it, without continuing in the use of these means, is the very madness of enthufiasm. In them God has promised to be found of those that feek him. Out of them you have no promife; and you may as reasonably hope God will create a new light for you to read by in the night, as that he will enlighten you without the established means, without prayer, and the word and facraments. And therefore whenever you are tempted to entertain fuch hopes, be affured it is a delufion of the devil's, and beware at the peril of your fouls, left the light which you suppose to be in you be darkness: for remember it is written, "Woe be unto them, " that put darkness for light, and light for dark-" nefs." In order to keep clear of this woe, let us wait in the use of the appointed means, and then we may with truth and foberness expect, that Christ will enlighten us with all faving truth, and particularly with a full and practical conviction of that great truth, which I proposed to consider in the fecond place, viz. That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

The fame finfulness which darkened the faculties of the foul, and separated us from God. ffirred up his holiness and justice and truth against Against these attributes we had sinned, and they were become our enemies, and until they received full fatisfaction, God the father would not accept us. He declared under the law that he would accept nothing in atonement but what was perfect, and perfection is not in the finner. The facrifices were to be without blemish. This was the standing rule-" Whatsoever hath a " blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not " be acceptable for you-and whofoever offereth " a peace-offering or a free-will offering, it shall " be perfect, to be accepted, there shall be no " blemish therein." (Lev. xxii. 20, 21.) This was both to shadow out the absolute perfection of our holy, harmless, and undefiled high-prieft, who should by the one offering of himself make a perfect fatisfaction for fin, and also to convince the finner of his utter inability to make any fatisfaction: For the finfulness of his nature, and the finfulness of his life would render every thing he could do imperfect and finful, until he should be accepted in the beloved.

Men are not much affected with the finfulness of their nature until Christ enlighten them. Sin which first blinded their eyes, by its deceitfulness keeps them blinded. And although the fountain of iniquity, the corrupt heart within, is always fending out filthy streams, yet it gives them little uneafiness until the divine light break in, and lay open to view its impurity. Then the sinner finds and confesses, that he is by nature a child of wrath. He freely subscribes to the scripture account of the corruption of mankind, as it is described by Moses and the prophets, and expressly treated of in the 14th and 53d Pfalms, upon which St. Paul has given us a comment in the 3d chapter of the Romans, and he sums it up in these emphatical words: "for all have sinned "and come short of the glory of God."

If any doubt should remain concerning the meaning of these scriptures, our church has removed it in her 9th article, where she determines, that " original fin ftandeth not in the " following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly " talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the " nature of every man, that naturally is engen-" dered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man " is very far gone from original righteoufnefs, " and is of his own nature inclined to evil, fo " that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the " fpirit, and therefore in every person born into " the world it deferveth God's wrath and dam-" nation." This is a truly fcriptural account of man's finful and guilty state by nature, to which add the finfulness of his life, and you separate him still farther from God: For what man is he that liveth and finneth not? And fin is the transgression

transgression of the law-and the law is holy, just, and good-it is fo pure and spiritual, that it cannot overlook the least offence. It must have perfect unerring obedience in thought, word, and deed, or it puts the offender under the curse: for it is written, " Cursed is every one, " who continueth not in all things that are " written in the book of the law to do them." You must continue (without intermission) in all things (not keeping nine commandments and breaking the tenth, not keeping them all outwardly, and breaking them in thought) that are written in the book of the law to do them; not only to purpose well, and to make good refolutions, but you must also do and execute them, or the law can shew you no mercy. And which of us has kept the law in this perfect manner? Who can fay, that he never offended in thought, word, or deed? Certainly every mouth must be stopt, and all the world must plead guilty before that righteous judge, who trieth the very hearts and reins.

Now God has already past the decree against a sinful nature, and against a sinful life. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." God is saithful and just to sulfil his decrees—he is almighty to execute them—and what can man do under a state of guilt and condemnation to reverse them? Two things are requisite, each of which are as much out of his power as to create a world.

He must first change his own nature, which is like the Ethiopian's changing his skin, and he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind with every fweet and holy temper. And then this change wrought by himfelf must make a full fatisfaction to the holiness of God for his past pollution, to the justice of God for the violation of his laws, and to the truth of God, that he may be true, and yet remit the threatened punishment. But alas! man has neither will nor power to change his nature: who can fay I have made my heart clean-I am pure from my fin? No man can truly fay, I have done it: for it is God's work. To create a clean heart, is as great an act, as to create the heart at first; and accordingly we find the prophet praying to God for it-" Create in me a clean heart, O God, " and renew a right spirit within me." And until God create a clean heart, how can any thing clean proceed from it? Who in an impure nature can do a pure action? Who under the curse of the law, and under the sentence of condemnation, can perform a meritorious fervice? Who by his own works can attain fuch perfect unfpotted righteoufnefs, that God the father will accept him in virtue of it? The scripture hath determined that there is none righteous, no not one, and that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified; and our church has determined the same in her articles and homilies, affirming

affirming that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our own works or defervings.

A great part of the mistakes in religion arises from men's not attending to these truths. They have not a deep conviction of their loft estate by nature, which occasions their not feeing in its proper light the necessity of their recovery by grace. The malady of a finful heart is not painful enough to make them apply to the fovereign physician: nor is the burden of a finful life heavy enough to perfuade them to feek the comfort of this fcripture--" Come unto me, all ye that are " weary and heavy laden, and I will give you " rest." But when conscience alarms them, when guilt terrifies, and they read the fentence of condemnation past upon them in the law, then helplefs and miferable in themselves, with transports of joy will they receive the glad tidings of the gospel, which discovers to them how they may be reconciled to an offended God. To fuch perfons, whose eyes the Lord has opened to fee their guilt and their mifery, the gospel sets forth Jesus Christ as the sole foundation of their acceptance. We are faid to be accepted in the beloved; who came in our nature to work out that perfect righteoufness for us, which infinite holiness, and justice, and truth required, and which we could not by

our own power attain; but by the merits of his obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection, he is able to cloath us with the immaculate robe of his righteousness, in which we shall be presented before God the father without spot of sin unto salvation.

It must be always remembered, that our Saviour was God and man united in one Christ; by which union whatever he did and fuffered for us became truly divine and infinite. Jefus shed his blood, and the scripture fays it was the blood of God. Jesus died for us, and the scripture says, that God laid down his life. In what fense can these expressions be understood, unless the Godhead and manhood were united in one person? This fundamental doctrine of God's being in Christ reconciling the world unto himfelf must never be forgotten, when we are speaking of the merits of Christ's actions and sufferings. Our nature was impure and corrupt, the imaginations of our hearts were only evil continually. Christ came in a pure spotless nature, separate from sinners, that whatever he did for them might appear without blemish before God the father. He began his ministry with refisting the devil, and all his temptations, to atone for our yielding to them; for us he conquered, and from his conquest, grace is derived to the faithful to resist all his temptations. Then he obeyed the law; its purity, its spirituality, its extensiveness, could find

find in him no transgression in thought, word, or deed. Its highest demands were answered: for according to its utmost rigour, " he continued in " all things that are written in the book of the " law to do them." And thus he redemed us from the curse of the law, and as by one man's difobedience many were made finners, fo by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Then he humbled himfelf to fuffer what we ought to have fuffered for our difobedience. The holy innocent Jesus bore our griefs and carried our forrows throughout the scene of his bitter passion. See him on the eve of the crucifixion in the garden, alone, proftrate upon the cold ground, in an extreme sharp night, and lo! at the fight of that load which he was going to take upon him, a præternatural fweat flows through his raiment, and falls to the ground in great drops. Oh curfed fin! with what an holy hatred ought we to crucify thee, fince the profpect only of the number and guilt of our fins, and the wrath and vengeance of the father due to them, forced our bleffed Lord to fweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Being apprehended, he came as a free ready victim to bear those sufferings, of which we cannot form a perfect idea at present, and unless the vengeance of a justly offended God should hereafter pour the vials of his wrath upon our guilty heads, we shall never know them. God grant

grant that Christ may have endured them for every one of us. The outward part of his passion was but a faint picture of what he endured, when the chastifement of our peace was laid upon him, and yet of the outward part he might truly fay, " Is it nothing to you, all " ye that pass by, Behold and see if ever there " was any forrow like unto my forrow," &c. The shame that ought to cover all our faces he endured; for us the guilty, and shameless in guilt, if by continuing in fin we put him again to an open shame, he was despised and rejected of men; he was mocked, and derided, and spit upon, buffeted and fcourged, crowned with thorns and blindfolded, falfly accused, and falfly condemned. Then behold him bearing his crofs. When we fee him fainting and finking under the load, and his face and raiment covered with blood, does it not bring to mind what he fays of himself in the book of Psalms? "The " ploughers ploughed upon my back and made " long furrows"---they ploughed up his back with the long and deep wounds of their stripes and fcourges; but by these stripes we were healed. Nay he fays more in another Pfalm, that he was fo wounded from head to foot, there was no whole part in his body: and you cannot doubt of it, if you raife your eyes to the cross, and fee the fuffering bleeding lamb of God in the last scene of his passion. And yet Vol. IV. R this

this was the least part of his sufferings. "Give " me any grief" fays the wife man, " but the " grief of the mind, for a wounded spirit who " can bear?" Who indeed can bear a spirit wounded of God? when Jefus was in the garden, his foul was exceeding forrowful, was in an agony, even unto death; but these were only the beginning of forrows. When he took upon him the iniquities of us all, and almighty justice finding them upon him demanded full fatisfaction, and received it to the uttermost farthing, then he had a wounded spirit, such as all the men upon earth, no not all the holy angels in heaven could have fustained for a moment. He bore it for fix hours hanging upon the curfed tree, until all was finished; then he bowed his head and gave up the ghoft. And thus he was made fin for us, and fuffered for our fins, who knew no fin himfelf, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: and he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, and tasted death for every man. He died to fave our fouls and bodies from the power of death. And he rose again, that we might receive justification to life, that our fouls might arise here from the grave of fin, and that our bodies might in God's good time arise from the grave of death, and both of them united in a glorified flate might receive eternal life as the free gift of God through Je-

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fus Christ our Lord. And being thus made perfect through obeying and fuffering, through death and refurrection he became the author of eternal falvation. He wrought out fuch perfect righteousness to be imputed unto finners, that he is now able to fave them to the uttermost. He has the infinite merit of his obedience to atone for their disobedience. He has the infinite merit of his fufferings to free them from fuffering. He died, to fave them from the first and the second death. He rose again, that they might rife to a newness of life here in grace, and to life everlafting in glory. And he is now the one mediator between God and man, able and willing to plead the fulness of his merits for the acceptance of every finner, who comes unto God the father through him. From

Hence it follows, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance. If God the father ever receive us as just and righteous, it must be in the perfect righteousness of his son. We must be accepted in the beloved; in whom the father was well pleased, and through whom he will be well pleased, with us. The passages before cited clearly prove, that this is the doctrine of all scripture. The Psalmist has given us the sentiments of the Old Testament worthies—
"I will go in the strength of the Lord God—I will make mention of thy righteousness, even

" of thine only." And God forbid, that we, under the New Testament, should make mention of any other. Shall we go about to establish our own righteousness in opposition to the righteoufnefs of God? Or shall we, under the guilt of original and actual fin, think of working out any righteousness for which we shall be accepted in part or altogether? If we could, then Christ obeyed and suffered in vain. If we could attain faving knowledge by the light of nature, and could act agreeably to it by the law of nature, then of what use would be the light and law of the gospel? But nature has no light, it is dark and blind in the things of God, and what can its law be, that is difcovered by a dark and blind nature, but darkness and blindness? Nay, it is something worse. If fallen nature has any law, it is the law of the members, which warreth against the law of God, and bringeth a man into captivity to the law of fin. This is the only law of nature to be met with in the word of God: for nature is fallen and corrupt; it is depraved in the will and affections, as well as ignorant in the understanding. It is always inclined and prone to evil; " for the flesh" (which stands in scripture for the fallen depraved affections of the natural man) " lufteth always against the spirit, and the spirit " against the flesh, and these two are contrary " the one to the other"—the will of the natural

man is always contrary to the will of God; from hence it follows, that what is called the religion of nature, is contrary to the religion of God: because nature used with religion confines it to man's nature, no other nature being concerned in the question; and man's nature is fallen and corrupt, finful in the fountain, and finful in the streams, and what then can the religion be, which this nature is able to difcover and to practice? Certainly it must be a blind and corrupt religion. Jesus Christ makes no part of it. He is not the foundation upon which it stands. The finest system of the religion of nature that ever was delineated builds nothing upon him, and fince there is no other foundation but him, confequently it stands upon nothing. And if the heart was not corrupt as well as blind, it would be unaccountable what should tempt men with the pure word of God in their hands, which is able to make them wife unto falvation, to neglect it, and to write and read and study those antichristian systems, which can teach no wisdom, but what is earthly, fensual, devilish.

Men and brethren, be not offended; it behoves me to use great plainness of speech. If Iwas to fpeak fmooth things, and to give flattering titles to the religion of nature, I should not be the fervant of Christ: for this religion was fet up, and has been used to hurt his interest, and when we fee it has fucceeded, furely it is voutlelves

high time for those fervants, who love their master's praise more than the praise of men, to set themselves strenuously against it. Happy will it be for this place, if the noble company of his fervants should increase, until the religion of nature has not one admirer left. Jefus Christ will be exalted among you in proportion as the religion of nature falls in esteem: and he has promifed, " them that honour me, I will honour." Honour Jesus Christ, and exalt him above all, and then his highest honours shall descend upon this university, and he will make he very enemies to be at peace with her. Oh for that happy day, when the honour that is of God shall be fought after as the crown and reward of all your studies. And why need we doubt it? We have an earnest before our eyes. Do we not see the religion of nature losing its interest every day? Do not men begin to be afraid of trufting the vast concerns of eternity upon it? And have they not good reason? For has it not appeared, from what has been faid, that its first principles are antichristian? They suppose man's natural faculties to be able to investigate the things of God-Scripture absolutely denies it. They suppose he has will and power to act agreeably to the will of God-Scripture absolutely denies that he has either will or power. They suppose that by practifing the duties of natural religion you may altogether or in part render yourselves

yourselves acceptable to God-Scripture absolutely denies this, declaring that there is no other foundation of acceptance, but Jesus Christ. And besides, the religion of nature manifestly tends to rob the God of our falvation of his glory, and to lessen the merits of his righteousness, as much as scripture tends to exalt both. And both are exalted, wherever the scripture is received pure and unmixed with human fyftems; and we have melancholy experience of the contempt offered to both, wherever the religion of nature is embraced. The doctrine of the ever-bleffed trinity, on which all scripture stands, makes no part of this religion. So that the religion of the bible and the religion of nature have different objects of worship. The christian worships one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; but this is rank idolatry with the natural man, who adores one fupreme being, a metaphyfical divinity, existing in one person, with certain imaginary attributes, fuch as infinitely extended, filling all space, &c .-- Hence he explodes the divinity of Jesus Christ---Hence he despises the authority of his laws .-- Hence that dissoluteness of morals throughout 'the kingdom, which all men fee, and even the profesfors of natural religion Would to God they were convinced, what a great share they have in it, and how much of it they have to answer for. It would be for their present and eternal peace, if instead

of maintaining and teaching this unfcriptural religion, which is the fink of herely and corruption, they would join their hearts and hands in exalting the religion of Jesus Christ, and his infallible word, wherein that religion is contained, and in labouring to bring the lives as well as the opinions of men into obedience to it. How highly it is incumbent upon you, my brethren, to promote this much-defired reformation, I need not farther urge at prefent, than by reminding you of a very awful truth, to which we have all fet our hands, and may God fet our hearts to act agreeably to it. What I mean is the 18th article of our church, wherein we have declared, "They also are to be had accurfed, that pre-" fume to fay, that every man shall be faved " by the law or fect which he professeth, so that " he be diligent to frame his life according to " that law, and the light of nature. For holy " fcripture doth fet out unto us only the name " of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be faved." In this article we have given in our public testimony before God and his church against the light and the law of nature, and with our own mouths have put both of them under the curse. And shall we with the same mouths afterwards preach up the light and law of nature, and pronounce them bleffed? God forbid. I hope his good spirit will keep us free from this monstrous guilt, and enable us in all our preaching to fet forth only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be faved.

But it may be here enquired, if man in a state of nature be at enmity with God, and can be accepted only through Jesus Christ, by what means shall he feek this reconciliation? The scripture has given us this plain and easy method. God the father accepts us through the all-perfect righteousness of Christ; this righteousness is imputed unto us by faith; and the true living faith is a divine grace wrought in the foul by the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is not the refult of comparing evidence, and of giving the affent to the strongest arguments: for a man may do this without the least grain of faving faith; but it is, according to St. Paul, the gift of God-And in another place he calls it one of the fruits of the spirit-And St. Peter says, it is God that purifieth the heart by faith. He enables the finner, who finds his want of Christ's righteoufness, to feek it, and to lay hold of it: for whoever hungers and thirsts after Christ's righteoufnefs, has a promife, that he shall be filled, even filled with peace and joy in believing that this righteousness is imputed unto him, and with the love of God, which is shed abroad in his heart by the holy spirit. And if there be any truth in God or man, this promife is now fulfilled, and every one that enters in to our Lord's kingdom finds righteoufness and peace and joy in the holy Ghost.

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Some persons think they can easily evade the force of this reasoning, by suggesting it to be possible, that all this may be a delusion. If a man is not acquainted with the scripture marks of true faith, and is not careful to compare them with his own experience, possibly he may be deluded, and fancy, that God has accepted him, when he has not. But if he fets out deeply convinced of his want of faith, waits for it in the instituted way, in that way receives it, and the effects of true faith follow upon receiving it, then if fuch a person may be deluded, there is no certainty in the world. The fcriptures were written to direct us in these points, and they are fo plain, that the way-faring man, though foolish, cannot err therein. They have given us one infallible rule to guide our enquiries, which is to examine the nature of faith by its purifying virtue. Wherever the true faith is, it purifies the heart, cleanfing it from the pollution and from the guilt of fin, and destroying also the dominion of fin, fo that the believer daily grows in grace, and goes on in his christian course, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

If faith does not work thus in an holy life, it is indeed a delusion. What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? If he have not a working faith, an active operative grace, purifying the heart from sin, and producing in the clean heart

all the fruits of the spirit, he wants the scripture marks of true faith; and let him talk ever fo much, and be ever fo ftrongly perfuaded of his acceptance with God, he is in a dangerous delusion. It is but a dead thing, which he supposes to be the living faith: for it is written, " As the body " without breath is dead, fo faith without works " is dead also." Works are the breath of faith. If it be alive it will breathe, as certainly as the living body breaths. If it have no breath, no works to evidence its life, the fcripture looks upon it to be a dead carcafs; but if it breaths, and acts, and abounds in every good word and work to the glory of God, and to the fervice of men, then we may with as much certainty pronounce it to be the true faith, as we can pronounce the body to be alive, when it is able to perform all the offices of its animal life: for as the body while it breaths is alive, fo faith while it works is alive alfo. In this case there can be no delufion: because we follow the fure rule laid down for our direction, By their fruits ye shall know them. How can we mistake the fruits of the spirit for the fruits of the flesh? Is not every tree known by its own fruit? Do men ever think of gathering figs of thorns, or grapes of a bramble-bush? The fruits of grace, and of fallen nature, are as opposite as the two fpirits which produce them. The one abounds in the works of the flesh, the other crucifies the Hub flesh

flesh with its affections and lusts. The one fills the mind with spiritual pride, envy, and malice, the other begins with humility, and works by love. The one lives in open transgression of the laws of God, the other conforms his words and works, and even the thoughts of his heart, to the standard of scripture. Can you see these different fruits, and be at a loss to determine, who is the author of each? Surely we want no evidence to disprove the pretences of an adulterer, a fornicator, an unclean person, and the rest mentioned by the apostle. Their lives speak their want of faith. By their fruits we fee that they have not the root of matter within them, because they hold the truth in unrighteousness. They must either have deluded themselves, or elfe they are downright hypocrites: for it is of the very essence of true faith to destroy fin, and to work in an holy obedience. When we are accepted in the beloved, and faith in his blood has purified our hearts, then we are, through his grace, both prepared and also able to shew this work of faith in our lives and conversations; and this point comes to be confidered under the third head, which was to prove, That Jefus Christ is the foundation of all holy odedience. But this I must leave for the subject of another discourse, and would only observe at present from what has been faid, that fince Christ is the foundation of all faving knowledge, it is our fleffi duty

duty to feek it from him in all the means of grace, and especially in the word: for the commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. Whoever hears and reads it with humility and prayer, will find the eyes of his understanding enlightened. He will fee clearly the things of God, and will fee more clearly, than others can, the useful arts and sciences. If he study them under the direction of divine grace, and with a view to the divine glory, the eternal light will shine into his heart, and give him more understanding than his teachers. And fince Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance with God the father, let us feek to be accepted through faith, and never think of fetting up any righteousness of our own in opposition to his. He is the Lord our righteoufness, through whose merits imputed unto us by faith, God will receive us as just and righteous. And may the holy Spirit give you the practical conviction of these two important truths, that youmay find the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and may through his all-perfect righteousness be presented before God the father without spot of fin unto falvation; to whom with the Son and the holy Spirit three persons in the unity of the Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, in the church militant and triumphant, now and for eyer. Amen. or established box blow box is to be

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SERMON II.

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Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

FROM the scope and design of these words, which were opened in a former discourse, it was proposed to consider the following particulars:

First, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all faving knowledge.

Secondly, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the father.

Thirdly, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Laftly, He is the foundation of our present and eternal happiness.

Under the first head it was proved, that man's natural ignorance and blindness in the things of God made it necessary he should be enlightened. Jesus Christ came into the world to open the blind eyes, and to be a light to them that sat in darkness. He says of himself, "I am the "light of the world, and whosoever believeth "in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall "have the light of life." He is as truly the light of the spiritual, as the sun is the light of the material world, and whoever seeks to be enlightened

lightened with any faving truth, must receive it from the gracious influence of his divine rays. And under the

Second head man's natural corruption, and actual finfulness, were confidered. The holiness, justice, and truth of God could not accept the finner, while he lay in this state of pollution and guilt, and he could do nothing to deliver himself from it, but must have lived here and for ever feparated from God, unless Jesus Christ had obeyed and fuffered, died and rifen again, to work out that perfect righteousness, through the merits of which imputed unto the finner by faith, God the father will now accept him, and receive him as just and righteous into his love and into his heaven. From whence it follows by direct confequence, that until he be thus accepted he can do no good works, which comes to be confidered under the

Third head, viz. that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Man in his natural state cannot perform any holy obedience. He wants both will and power, until his person be accepted through Jesus Christ, and united to him by true and lively faith. The doctrine of our church upon this point is very clear and full. In the 13th article, entitled, "Of works before "justification," she teaches that—"Works done "before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration

" of his spirit, are not pleasant to God; for-" asmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus " Christ, neither do they make men meet to " receive grace, or (as the school authors fay) " deferve grace of congruity: yea rather for that " they are not done as God hath willed and " commanded them to be done, we doubt not " but they have the nature of fin." Our works are not acceptable, until we have the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit to render our perfons accepted. Nay the very best works we can do, if they be not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, have certainly in them the nature of fin. "We " doubt not but they have the nature of fin," is a very strong expression: but our pious reformers could not foften it. They had left the bishop of Rome upon account of the doctrine of merit, which the Papifts hold, and it is the most dangerous of all their tenets: for hereby they go about to establish their own righteousness, not fubmitting themselves to the righteousness of God. All the reformers joined in afferting justification by faith only, knowing that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is impossible to be more clear and express against the merit of works, than the compilers of our articles and homilies are; they feem to have been guided in their

their opinion by two principal reasons, both taken from scripture, the first respecting God, the second ourselves.

It is impossible to do any good works wellpleafing to God, until we are accepted in Christ, because our whole nature is finful-in it dwelleth no good thing, and without the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit no good thing can ever dwell. The scripture declares us to be by nature children of wrath. We became objects of God's wrath, when by the original offence mankind transgressed his holy, just, and good law. Then his holinefs, justice, and goodness became concerned to inflict the threatened punishment, which they did inflict, and to which every fon of fallen Adam is subject, until he be accepted through Jesus Christ. In this fallen state he is like an attainted rebel, who cannot do any action that is deemed good and valid in law, until his attainder be reverfed, and he be restored in blood. This is our very case in spirituals. What can we do, that will be deemed good and valid in the court of heaven, while we are under a state of forfeiture, our persons are guilty, and our whole nature (as our church expresses it) deserves God's wrath and damnation?

And we are still more incapable of doing any acceptable works, if we consider the state we are in by actual transgression. We are under Vol. IV.

fentence of condemnation for the first offence? for the law is of fo pure and spiritual a nature as to reach to the inmost thoughts of the heart. It requires truth in the inward parts, and expects perfect obedience there, as well as in the words, and actions. The stile of it is, " Do " this, and thou shalt live." It promises life, but to them only, who never err from its commandments. One fingle failing cuts us off from the promifed life, and puts us under the curse : for it is written, "Curfed is every man who " continueth not in all things, that are written " in the book of the law to do them." Now the fame law, which has brought him in guilty before God cannot acquit him afterwards; because he is already a convict, is sentenced, and under the curse, and he can think of no method of escaping the deserved punishment, but to pay an unerring obedience for the future. Supposing he could do this, yet it would be making no fatisfaction; because after one transgression by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified. It is an adjudged case, that partial obedience can make no atonement to the law, which required perfect obedience: the equity of this proceeding we acknowledge in our own laws. If a criminal, found guilty of murder, was to alledge in his defence, that he had broken no other law of the land, that he was not a thief nor an adulterer, &c. would this plea be allow-

ed in court? Would he be acquitted of the murder, because it was not attended with robbery? No. The judge would observe to hims that he came there to be tried for a murder, and that he was found guilty by the law, and as fuch must be condemned: for he that said, Thou shalt not steal, faid also, Thou shalt do no murder. Now if thou commit no robbery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law: for whofoever shall keep the whole law, and vet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, and is under guilt and condemnation, as if he had offended against the whole law. The law of God is pure and spiritual, and allows of no deviation from it. If it gives life, it must have perfect unerring obedience; where this is wanting in one inftance, it cannot take partial obedience as any atonement for disobedience: from whence it follows, that men under the guilt of original and actual fin cannot, with respect to God, perform any holy obedience. And

With respect to ourselves, there is another reason, which being taken from a matter of fact, should carry with it sull conviction. Our fallen nature is so entirely depraved, that it has neither will nor power to perform any holy obedience. The old man of sin, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, can do nothing but sin. And until he be put off and crucissed with all his affections and lusts, we cannot put

on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: for we are not only corrupt, but also under the bondage of corruption; not only finners, but also flaves to fin, fold under fin, and led captive to commit it by the devil at his will. Sin has fuch an absolute dominion, that although it exercises the most cruel tyranny, yet men have no defire to shake off its yoke. Sin wears away their bodies in its fervice, and yet they are pleafed with their own destruction, and sin on. Whenever the tyrant commands-Do this, the natural man doeth it, though it be at the peril of his life. When fin puts him upon a course of uncleanness, which he knows will bring the infirmities of old age upon him before he has come to manhood, or a course of intemperance, which must end in painful and acute diftempers, the poor flave fubmits. And must not fin reign in his mortal body, fince he thus obeys it in the lufts thereof? Must it not have absolute dominion over him, fince he thus yields his members inftruments of unrighteousness unto fin, and yields them, even to work out his own destruction? And when he fees this destruction before his eyes, yet he has no defire to avoid it; we have neither will nor power to deliver ourselves from fin's dominion: because when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. The foul was enflaved, and without ftrength to reco-

ver its liberty as well as the body. Which of its faculties are free and able to cast off the tyranny of fin? Can this good defire arife first in the imagination? It cannot. The imaginations of the heart of the natural man are evil, and only evil, and that continually. Can it arise in the understanding? It cannot: for it is in dark-When the Lord looked down from heanefs. ven upon the children of men, to fee if there were any that did understand, and seek after God, he found none, no not one--they were wife enough to do evil, but to do good they had no knowledge; neither had they a will to chuse it: for the natural man follows the will of the flesh, which is always contrary to the will of God, and with the heart and affections he ferves the law of fin.

Thus the dominion of fin is univerfal. It commands all the faculties of foul and body, which ferve it with a willing and uninterrupted obedience; and from what has been faid with refpect to God, and with respect to ourselves, it is evident that the natural man is utterly unable to perform any holy obedience. This is the plain doctrine of scripture, and it is confirmed by our church in her 10th article, which declares, that "the condition of man after the "fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and "prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon "God;

" God: wherefore we have no power to do " good works, pleafant and acceptable to God, " without the grace of God by Christ pre-" venting us, that we may have a good will, " and working with us, when we have that " good will." Both the good will, and the power to work with it come from Christ; and the manner in which he bestows both upon us is thus described in scripture. God the father accepts us as righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ, whereby we are justified; upon which we are united to Christ through faith given us by his holy fpirit; and from this union we receive continual supplies of grace to enable us to bring forth the fruits of the fpirit, which are well-pleasing unto God the father.

This vital union with Christ the head of the body is the principal of divine life in all his members, and it is expressed in scripture by various phrases, which denote the reality and absolute certainty of it, and which cannot admit of a metaphorical sense, such as, "Christ's dwelling in us, and we in him, our being rooted and planted into him, and built up in him, our being of one spirit and one sless with him, our living and being led by his fpirit." And it is also represented by various images, such as the union between the head and the body, what a strange body would it be, which

which had only a metaphorical union with the head? between the bread and the eater, what fort of a constitution must it be, which could live upon metaphorical bread? and between the foundation and the building, what kind of a building would it be, which should stand upon a metaphorical foundation? But chiefly between the vine and the branches, which our Lord has largely treated of in John xv. " I am "the vine," fays he, "ye are the branches. " As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself ex-" cept it abide in the vine, no more can ye ex-" cept ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, " and I in him, the fame bringeth forth much " fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." If any man abide in Christ, and bear much fruit to the glory of the father, he must be as truly and as vitally united to Christ, as the branches are to the vine: for he is the root and flock, from whence the branches receive their nourishment, and are enabled to bring forth fruit: and therefore whoever is not united to Christ can have no principle of divine life in him, but is like a branch cut off from the stock and withered, whose end is to be burnt.

From these scriptures it is evident, that we cannot live to God nor bring forth any fruit unto holiness until we are united to Christ, and have fellowship with him. The spirit of God is the bond of this union: for he gives us the true

faith, whereby the foul is enabled to reject every thing that would separate it from Christ, and to cast away all hopes of salvation in its own endeavours and works, and thus placing no merit in any thing it can do, it closes in with the free offer of mercy in Christ Jesus, whom faith has a peculiar fitness to receive, and does actually receive him with all his fulnefs, as thefe fcriptures testify, " For we have an access," fays the apostle, " and entrance by faith into " that grace of Christ, wherein we stand." And again, " Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith." And that most holy faith, whereby Christ dwelleth in us, enables us to live the life of Christ: for by purifying all the faculties of the foul it makes us to be like him, to love his image, and to defire it may be perfectly formed in our fouls. And accordingly by the close and intimate union which faith keeps up between Christ and us, we are made conformable to his death and refurrection: for faith draws virtue from his death to destroy the dominion of sin, and from his refurrection to rife to newness of life. Nothing but the influence of the death of Christ, and a real tellowship with it, can free us from fin's dominion. We must be planted together in the likeness of his death, if we ever get any mortifying power over the body of fin. And we must be also planted into the likeness of his refurrection, that we who are by nature dead in trespasses

trespasses and sins may be quickened in Christ, and made alive in him. St. Paul had happy experience of this doctrine—" I am crucissed, says he, with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the sless, I live by the faith of the fon of God." And whoever is crucissed with Christ in the same manner, has the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth he should not serve sin, and whoever liveth by the same faith in the son of God, has continual supplies of grace from Jesus Christ to enable him to live a life of holiness unto God.

This is the fcripture doctrine of holy obedience. We are therein taught, that God must work in us whatever is well-pleafing to him. St. Paul prays thus for his Hebrews: " Now the " God of peace make you perfect in every good " work to do his will, working in you that " which is well-pleafing in his fight, through " Jesus Christ:" who came in the flesh to destroy in us ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we might be fit to perform holy obedience. "The " great God and our Saviour Jefus Christ, fays " he, gave himself for us, that he might redeem " us from all iniquity, and purify unto himfelf a " peculiar people, zealous of good works." And again another fcripture faith-" We are created " in Christ Jesus unto good works." When we are made new creatures in him, then have we a

new nature with new affections, which delight to obey the will of God, as much as the old finful nature hated it: for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. He is renewed throughout, in body, foul, and spirit. The body, which fin enflaved and defiled, is cleanfed by the blood of Christ, and confecrated by his Spirit for an holy temple to the living God. The foul is enriched with the divine graces of faith, and hope, and love, which work upon all the faculties, restraining the imagination, enlightening the understanding, regulating the will, and turning the heart and affections to God; and then renewing the spirit day by day with the fweet and holy tempers of the bleffed Jesus, that the whole man may grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Nothing availeth in Christ Jesus but this new creature. God the Father will accept of no obedience, unless it be the work of this new nature. Our best duties and services are displeafing to him, unless we be renewed by faith in the spirit of the mind, as our church has clearly determined in the 12th article. " Albeit " that good works, which are the fruits of faith, " and follow after (don't go before) justification, " cannot put away our fins, and endure the fe-" verity of God's judgment, yet are they pleaf-" ing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do " fpring

" fpring out necessarily of a true and lively faith,

" infomuch that by them a lively faith may be

" as evidently known, as a tree differend by the

66 fruit "

From these authorities it is evident, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Until you be accepted in him, you can do no good works; nay, without him you can do nothing. The fcripture and our articles and homilies speak full to this point, and they entirely overthrow the destructive doctrine of the Papists and Socinians, who agree in maintaining the merit of works. Every true fon of our church has renounced their herefies. The scripture has affured him, that without holiness no man shall fee the Lord; but he finds the finfulness of his nature reigning in many unholy tempers, and breaking out into many offences, against which he strives, but not in his own strength: for he is convinced, that his foul is by nature dead in trefpaffes and fins, and that all his firiving can no more give it spiritual life, than rubbing and chafing a dead carcass can restore to it animal life, and therefore he does not feek to attain holinefs. while his nature continues corrupt and dead in fin. The gospel method is directly contrary. It first cleanses the heart, from whence are the iffues of life, and then the streams will certainly run pure: It directs you to labour first to be reconciled unto God, that you may be accepted through

through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and justified by his merits, and then you will have a new nature inclined to holiness, and endued by the holy spirit with power to seek and to attain it. After you have received justification to life, you may go on with the work of fanctification: for by juftification your nature is regenerate and new-born, and fanctification is the proper work of this regenerate nature, as it brings all its parts and faculties into use, whereby they improve and grow in strength. Justification, which is the new birth of the foul, is like the first birth of the infant into this world. When it is born, it has all the parts of the body perfect; no new ones are added afterwards, only thefe grow in fize and ftrength, until they reach to the stature of a man, as the graces grow in the justified foul until it arrive to a perfect man in Christ. And then God, who has been glorified by it upon earth, will receive it into his eternal glory through Jefus Christ our Lord-

Who is the foundation of our prefent and eternal happiness, as I proposed in the fourth and last place to consider. This is a direct consequence from what has been said, and does not require many words to illustrate it: for since the sinner has no saving knowledge, until Christ enlighten him; since God the Father will not accept his person, but through the righteousness of Christ, nor his works, but as done in Christ, and

flowing

flowing from living faith in him, then it is certain that whatever happiness he enjoys must be derived from the Lord and giver of grace and glory. He can merit none, for when he has done all these things that are commanded him, which yet no man has done, he was even then to say, I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which was my duty to do, and therefore I cannot deserve present, and much less eternal happiness from the hand of God.

By present happiness I mean those comforts of the gospel which I have been describing, and which the heavenly comforter administers to the finner, when he is enlightened with faving truth, when he is convinced of his reconciliation with God the Father, and fatisfied that the divine holiness, justice, and truth, are no longer his enemies, but will now make all things work together for his good; and when he is affured of the truth of his reconciliation, as well from the inward witness of the spirit of God with his spirit, as from the holy obedience in which he now delights, and which he has power to perform. This happy foul enjoys the comforts of prefent falvation, which are daily strengthened in it more and more, as it grows in grace, and bears fairer and richer fruits of holiness: for this growth in grace is an evident proof of our acceptance with God, and a fruitful fource of fpiritual comfort: when we find ourselves renewed

in the spirit of our minds, and are pleased with the will of God in the inner man, and are enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments, the happiness arising from hence can no more be described than the joys of heaven. If you would know what bleffings, love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the spirit bring to the foul, O taste and see how gracious the Lord is. And whenever he gives you the experience of them, you will then find that in them heaven is already begun in the foul; and if by believing we can rejoice at prefent with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, what must our joy be when we receive the end of our faith, even the eternal falvation of our fouls. When Jefus Christ admits us into his kingdom, and bestows upon us all his spiritual bleffings in heavenly places, what happiness we shall then feel, tongue cannot utter, nor can heart conceive. And inconceivably great though it be, yet it is all the free gift of God through Jefus Christ our Lord, " for he hath given us " eternal life, and this life is in his fon:"-And faith is the hand by which we receive it: " for " he that believeth on me, faith the bleffed "Jefus, hath everlasting life." He purchased it for us. We could not attain it by any of our own works, nor could the highest angel in heaven merit it for one of the fons of men. It was bought for us by an inestimable price, by the obedience and fufferings of the God-man Christ Jefus,

Jesus, and he therefore obeyed and suffered, died and rose again, that we might be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. He acted as our representative, by which means we have an interest in all that he did and suffered. He refifted the temper, obeyed the law, fuffered the punishment due to the transgression of it, even unto death, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and fat down on the throne of glory, as the head and representative of all the elect people of God. In all these things he acted as the head of the body the church; and we commonly fay, a person is crowned, when the crown is put upon his head. Now our head is already crowned, and therefore fo long as he possesses his glory, we his members shall possess ours, and shall share in the glories of our heavenly king. What these eternal glories are, it surpasseth all understanding to comprehend. The scripture has revealed them to us chiefly in negative defcriptions. It removes from them that imperfection to which all fublunary good is fubject. It calls them riches, but then they are not subject to rust and moth, nor can thieves break in to rob us of them. It compares them to an inheritance, but then it is always in peace, no armies can lay it waste, no irregular passion can interrupt the happy enjoyment of it: and there can be no fear of lofing it, because all tears are wiped away from every eye; and upon every head there is placed

placed a crown of glory, which is "incorrup-" tible," has no principles of diffolution, and therefore no defect in it; is "undefiled," has no stain of sin, or infirmity under it, and "fa-" deth not away," all human glory like a flower of the field withers and dies, but this is always flourishing, and blooms in never-fading spring. Thus the scripture removes every thing from our heavenly happiness, which renders our present enjoyments imperfect; and then to make the description full, puts eternity to it. And yet, even of this eternal happiness we have but faint ideas; we know it at present but in part. We shall know it better when our almighty Saviour beflows it upon us. When he admits us into his presence, receives us into his heaven, and places the never-fading crown of glory upon our heads, then we shall feel what an eternal weight of glory is. Then we shall enjoy that beatific vision, without which heaven would not be defirable, and we shall see the Lord Jesus face to face, and shall know that he is above all bleffing and praise. We know indeed at present that he is God over all bleffed for ever, but the corruptible body present down the foul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, fo-that our knowledge and our praises are imperfect. But then we shall be free from this earthly clog, and shall fee more of his excellencies, and shall be more able to praise them. We shall continually find

find new beauties, new worlds of delight in him; for his perfections being infinite, will afford us fresh subject of praise to eternity. And our interest in them being an act of his free grace, will render them to us more precious, and the contemplation of them more fweet. Every new day of glory (if I may fo fpeak, when time is no more) will bring us more in debt to his free grace. The holding of glory shall be free grace without end; fo that Christ's relation of creditor, and ours of debtor, shall grow and be greater for ever. Redeemed finners can never fay, Now our tribute of praise to Jesus is fully paid, because they will be always contracting new debts, and while they fland confirmed in blifs, the more broken debtors will they be. The longer they enjoy the glory of heaven through millions of ages, the debt to the Lamb that purchased it for them by his blood will grow infinitely. Praifes to eternity can take nothing from the debt; for the debt increases, while they are praising. And let the innumerable company of angels join the spirits of just men made perfect : let them raise their hearts and voices to the highest strains of praise, they would still fall short of the greatness of his merits. O holy Spirit! now give us a heart and a tongue to join our imperfect praifes with theirs. With them we ascribe salvation to the Lord God omnipotent. Bleffing, and honour, Vol. IV. and

and glory, and power be unto him that fitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

I shall here finish the doctrinal parts of this discourse, but I cannot conclude without making a short application. Every useful doctrine may be reduced to practice; and all the chriftian doctrines have a direct tendency to operate in our lives, and to produce their proper effects in our converfations. We have been confidering fome of the excellencies of God our Saviour, which are not mere speculative points; because he was made unto us wifdom and righteoufness, and fanctification, and redemption. He is our all-wife prophet to enlighten the blindness of our understanding, and to teach us faving knowledge. He is our all-meritorious priest, through the merits of whose perfect facrifice the pollution and the guilt of our fins are taken away, and we are accepted as righteous before God the Father. And he is our almighty king, by whose grace the dominion of fin is destroyed in us, and we are enabled to perform an holy obedience. " Jefus " Christ is all and in all: for we are complete " in him." Salvation from first to last, from the first ray of light which broke into our dark and finful fouls, until we fee Christ in the fulness of glory, is all his work, and to him must the honour of it be ascribed. He is the foundation on whom it all stands: for "other foundation can

" no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jefus "Chrift."

Men, brethren, and fathers, fuffer the word of exhortation. You profess, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all faving knowledge: do you then feek it from him in the study of his holy word, and through the bleffing of his good Spirit upon your studies? or are any of you feeking it from the unfcriptural unnatural light of nature, from that nature which is totally dark and blind, until the abstracted metaphysician has stolen some great truths from the revealed word, and then boafts that he was felf-enlightened, and that they were felf-irradiated upon his own mind by a more mysterious and enthusiastic light than the maddest Quaker ever pretended to. In their metaphyfical reveries, let them talk of their light of nature; yet if God may be heard, nature is in darkness. It is blind in the things of God; nay more, until it be renewed, it cannot fee and know them. To whom then would you go for the knowledge of them? To Christ, as held forth in his word, and applied by his Spirit, or rather to human learning and its arts and fciences? God forbid. They have not one ray of their own to give. Their boafted luftre is but a borrowed light. Blot the fun out of heaven and these bright stars are at once in the blackness of darkness: for there is but one created fun to enlighten this material world, as there is but one

uncreated fun to enlighten the spiritual world here in grace, and for ever in glory. When the arts and sciences keep their proper station, reflecting the light cast upon them by the sun of righteousness, then the study of them is fanctified, and they are highly useful in the school of Christ; but unfanctified, they only tend to puff up and to feed the pride of corrupt nature. Let this be an answer to the adversary, who may object, that I am a decrier of human learning. When it is preferred to divine, I do decry it, but in no other respect. Am I an enemy to light because I prefer the all-reviving light of the fun to the faint glimmering light of the stars? Christ is the sun of righteousness, the light of the spiritual world. Let it then be your first and principal fludy to attain from him divine learning, and in fubordination to it feek human learning. Let God be your teacher in the things of God. Read his word, as he who was wifer than his teachers did, day and night; but read it with humility, and always begin with the excellent prayer before mentioned, "Lord open " thou mine eyes, that I may fee wondrous " things in thy law:" the Lord will open them, and you will not only fee spiritual truths clearly, but will also be more diligent in the study of useful knowledge, and will attain more of it, than a man of the best parts, trusting to the mere strength of genius, can ever attain. And one great

great truth the word and the Spirit of God will certainly manifest to you, and that is,

Secondly, The manner of your acceptance. To a finner convinced of the corruption of his nature, and of the transgressions of his life, nothing can be more interesting than to know, whether God's justice and holiness and truth can pardon him. The fancied light of fallen nature cannot teach him this. It never did. It never led one learned heathen, Greek, or Roman, to Jefus Chrift. It never can: Because it is blind. and with the aid of all the sciences, blind it remains, until Christ by his word and spirit open its eyes. Then it fees, that his righteousness imputed to it by faith is the only method of being accepted as righteous before God the father. Are you then feeking to be accepted in the righteousness of the beloved? Or are you trying to work out fome righteoufness of your own, which altogether or in part may render you accepted? It must never be forgotten, that justification by faith only is the grand Protestant doctrine. Justification by works is downright Popery. We separated from the bishop of Rome, because he set up the merit of works in oppofition to the righteoufness of God. And lo! Protestant divines have fallen back again into the fink of Popery, maintaining the merit of works: as every man must do, who talks of the dignity and rectitude of human nature, of the dignity

dignity of finful nature, and of the rectitude of fallen nature, of natural religion, of the moral fense, and of the moral scheme, and of the fitness and relation of things: for these systems are big with contradictions, unless man be able of himself to discover and to practice such duties as will render him acceptable to God. And indeed, metaphyfical writers have afcribed to blind fallen nature both this will and power, maintaining that " every one may find within himself the " rule of right, and obligations to follow it." Bishop Butler's Sermons, p. 32. But what faith the scripture? Positively and expressly it speaks of man's having neither will nor power, unless they be given him of God. Being finful in heart and life he lies under fentence of condemnation by the just law of heaven, and like an attainted rebel he cannot do a legal act, until he be pardoned. Jesus Christ is the foundation of this pardon; and until we are accepted through his righteousness, our best works have in them the nature of fin. This is scripture, and the doctrine of our church. And can you believe a man to be a friend to either, who wants to establish the merit of works? Can he be a found Protestant, or a good church of England-man? No, he cannot. Certainly, my brethren, you would condemn him with one voice. Away then with all the metaphyfical rubbish, which has long obscured the scripture dostrine of acceptance:

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for the love of the Lord Jesus, and of his flock for whom he shed his blood, let us hear no more of the religion of nature-of that religion which finds us and leaves us children of wrath: for the fake of your own prefent and eternal peace let all metaphyfical fystems of the religion of nature be no more your favourite studies. You have the holy fcripture in your hands; whither would you go, but to it for the words of eternal life? And does it not teach you, that Jefus Chrift came into the world to redeem us from the miferies of our fallen nature? And whose cause then are these men defending, who want to establish a religion founded on that nature, from which Christ came to redeem us? Good God! what an attempt is this, for christian men, christian ministers, embassadors of Jesus Christ, not only to preach up the religion of nature, as if nature was not fallen, but also to make this religion of nature the foundation of revealed. What a monftrous paradox is this, natural religion the foundation of revealed? Is not this taking away Jesus Christ the fure foundation, which God hath laid, and putting the religion of nature under him as a foundation to bear him up, and thus trying to lay another foundation, which if God be true no man can lay. The folly, the guilt, and the danger of this proceeding are fo evident upon the principles before laid down, that I shall not urge the matter farther at present

only if there be here any admirers of this metaphysical and unnatural religion, it may be useful to them to consider, what this religion can do for them, even as they understand it, which the religion of the bible has not promised to do for them in a more full and ample manner, especially with respect to their performing an holy obedience, of which Jesus Christ is the sole foundation, which is the third inference from what has been said.

Until you are accepted in Christ you cannot do any good works: because your whole nature is corrupt, and nothing but corrupt fruit can grow upon it. Are you then feeking for an holy nature, that in it you may perform an holy obedience? Are you then praying to God to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that his willmay become yours, his word your study and delight, his Spirit your guide? And is it the defire of your foul, that you may be enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments unto the end? Is Christ the foundation of this great work? And are you convinced you want grace from him every moment to carry it on? Then bring this conviction into practice. Let it operate in your lives. Where would you feek his grace, but in the means of grace? And when your persons are accepted through the righteousness of Christ imputed to you by faith,

faith, then God will accept your attendance upon these means, but not before. Then he will be found of you in them, will give his bleffing to the use of them, and will enable you to abound in every good word and work to the praise of his glory. The scripture is express, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We can bear no fruit until we be grafted into him the true vine. Our church is exceeding clear upon this head. To their authorities we must submit, and we shall find the happy effects of embracing them, if they dispose us to feek, until God gives us a new nature with new faculties and affections, and enables us to bring forth much fruit to the praise of the glory of his free grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: for then we shall find the present comforts of the gospel sweetly drawing us on in the way of duty, until we be at last presented perfect in Christ Jesus. Perfect and complete in him, but not in our own righteoufness, we shall be presented before God the father without fpot of fin to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, referved in heaven for us.

To these truths every christian assents. He lays no other foundation for his present and eternal happiness than Jesus Christ, and he is a sure foundation: for he is the author and finisher of the faith, the author to begin it here in grace, the finisher to end it, when faith shall be swallow-

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ed up in vision. As he is the author of all the works of creation, fo is he the author of all the works of redemption, by whom they begin, through whom they are carried on, and in whom they will be completed: " For I am alpha and " omega, fays he, the first and the last, which " was, which is, and which is to come, the al-" mighty." He is the Lord God omnipotent, by whom all things were made; by his overruling providence they are supported: for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. He is the most blessed God and Saviour in the offices, of a prophet to enlighten our blind eyes, and to be our wisdom, of a priest to atone for the pollution and the guilt of our fins, and to be our righteousness, and of a king to destroy in us the dominion of fin, and to be our fanctification. And he is God the fovereign judge, before whose awful tribunal we must all soon appear. View Jefus Christ in these exalted stations, where he fits far above all principalities and powers, as the first and last in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and final judgment, and then fee whether you can exalt him high enough. Is not this almighty God and King far above all bleffing and praise? You cannot sufficiently extol the works of creation. Survey them with a philofopher's eye, and they will appear great and wonderful in wifdom and power, affording an unexhausted subject of praise. And how then Swollow) of had this mode, his constitution

shall we be able to magnify their maker, who is great above all his works? Especially great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty, in the redemption of a finful world: For when you glorify the Lord Jefus for this inestimable mercy, exalt him as much as you can, for even yet will he far exceed, and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength and be not weary: for you can never go far enough. How should we upon earth go far enough, when the glorified fpirits, who try to exalt him as much as they are able, yet fall short? He will always, to eternity he will, be above all bleffing and praife. The thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, who are now standing round his throne, admiring his perfections, and finging the fong of Mofes and the lamb, when they put forth all their ftrength and are not weary, still they can never go far enough. And when all the fons of God who shouted for joy at the first creation, shall again join their voices upon the number of the elects being perfected, still he will far exceed their most exalted fong. Angels and men with their highest strains of praise cannot come up to the greatness of our Lord's merit. Let the heavenly fong be continued through millions of ages, yet the God whom they celebrate is infinite, and their praise therefore must fall short of the subject. The perfection of the almighty creator, and the love of the all-merciful redeemer, are, to the

the redeemed of the Lord, fubjects which eternity cannot exhauft. O that it may be your happiness and mine to lay Jefus Christ and him only, for the foundation of all faving knowledge, of all acceptance with the father, and of all holy obedience, that having fpent our time here by the strength of his grace in his fervice and to his glory, we may be admitted to fee his perfections, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them, and may join our grateful hearts and voices with the bleffed company of angels, and the fpirits of just men made perfect, in finging the eternal hymn of thanks and praife. So be it, Lord Jefus, to the honour of the father, and to the glory of the eternal spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, whom the church militant now worships, and the church triumphant praifes for ever and ever. Amen. and with the varous tomous, bas dreams

godar enoughs this wise all the feel of God, who should should be joy at the first creation, shall egain join respectively on the number of the alocis being perfected, field be will fee carolines of the their most exalted forget. Angela and mean with their highest firstness of praife carnot contemp to the greatness or our local succise. I et the near the greatness or our local succise. I et the near venty fonce be continued through millions of ages well the God when they cold brate is infinite, and here may are the reference multi-fall those of the fall outs. They perfection of the almignsy creases, and the love or the allement ful redocater, are not the above or the allement ful redocater, are not the

tain of Cod all good things, even whatfoever we

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In a Treatise, entitled, The Flower of Godly Prayers, written by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Becon, and printed in the Year 1563, there is

A PRAYER FOR FAITH,

Which breathes the very Spirit of the Apostles Doctrine, and which I lay before the Reader, that he may pray for the Comforts of it in the devout Words of this boly Man.

denticed include that we make it boroughly the W E are taught by thy holy apostle, O most loving Saviour, that what soever is not of faith is fin, and that it is impossible to please thee without faith. And therefore they that come unto thee must believe that thou art God, yea, and fuch a God as is both able and will also abundantly reward all them that with true faith feek thee. For thy eyes, O Lord, look upon faith, and thou dost appear and shew thyself unto them, that have faith in thee: yea, through faith, thou being the king of glory, art married to the fouls of the faithful, and makest them partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy bleffed Spirit. Through faith fo many as believe are justified, made the fons and heirs of God, and have everlasting life. By faith we obtain

tain of God all good things, even whatfoever we ask in thy name. Seeing that faith is so precious a jewel in thy fight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine majesty; and we of our own nature cannot have this most fingular treasure except thou givest it unto us from above, and doest breathe it into our hearts by thy holy Spirit: for we of ourfelves are blind, ignorant, foolish, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the spirit of God, we most heartily befeech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulness, which we received of old Adam, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly perfuaded that thou art the fon of the living God, very God and very man, our alone sweet-smelling facrifice; our alone mediator, advocate, and intercessor, our alone wisdom, righteousness, fanctification, and redemption, by whom alone, and for whose fake only, thy heavenly father is well pleafed with us, our fins are remitted, grace and everlafting life are freely given unto us. O Lord God, fuffer us not to lean to our own wisdom, nor to believe, as blind flesh fancieth, nor to feek falvation where superstition dreameth; but let our faith only be grounded on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee with all our heart, to put our trust in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy bleffed name in adversity, and with joyful voices and more merry hearts,

hearts, to praise and magnify it in prosperity. Suffer us not to doubt neither of God thy heavenly father, nor of thee, God his fon, nor of God the Holy Ghost, but earnestly to believe that you being the distinct persons in the Deity, are notwithstanding, one very God, besides whom, there is no God, neither in heaven nor in earth. Grant alfo, that we may affuredly believe whatfoever is contained in the holy scriptures, and by no means fuffer ourselves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but mainly and stedfastly abide in the fame, even unto death, rage world, roar devil. And this faith, O fweet Jefu, increase thou daily in us more and more, that at the last, through thy goodness, we may be made perfect and strong men in thy holy religion, and shew ourselves both before thee and the world truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name: which with God the father, and God the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest true God, worlds without end. Amen.

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JEPHTHAH's VOW FULFILLED,

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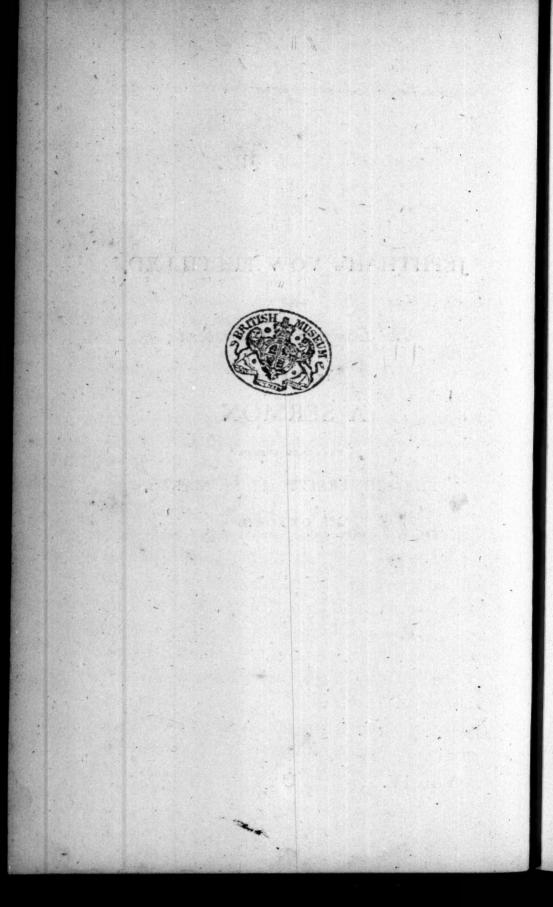
His Daughter not sacrificed;

PROVED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY, AT St. MARY's, in oxford.



JEPHTHAH's VOW FULFILLED.

JUDGES XI. 30, 31.

And Jephthah vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and said,
If thou shalt without fail deliver the Children of
Ammon into mine hands,

Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the Doors of my House to meet me, when I return in Peace from the Children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering.

THIS vow has been the subject of much ridicule; it has been represented, as rashly made and immorally executed, and the scripture itself has suffered through the character of Jephthah: the vindication of it also has been attended with so many difficulties, that an attempt to remove them must be of service to religion; and this I shall at present undertake. I shall endeavour to free it from the salfe interpretations which have been put upon it, and from the objections which have been made against it. But it is not the whole history I

shall treat in this manner: that would be too extensive a design for a single discourse. The principal point alone shall be now considered, namely Jephthah's sulfilling his vow, which I purpose to shew he might, and did sulfil without sacrificing his daughter.

The history has been generally understood in this fense: when the men of Gilead had placed Jephthah at their head, in order to deliver them from the children of Ammon; he gathered together his army, and before he begun the battle he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and promifed, that if God would prosper him, he would facrifice whatever should first meet him on his return. Upon this he begins the attack, and the Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hands, fo that he flew them with very great flaughter. fuccess he became obliged to a strict observance of his vow; and it unfortunately fo happened, that as he was returning to his house in peace, his only daughter, not knowing of his vow, came out with joy to meet him. Hereby she became according to his vow, the person to be facrificed, and he did offer her up for a burnt-offering.

This is the common interpretation of Jephthah's vow. It has generally been supposed that his daughter was facrificed. An action so contrary to the laws of God and man, and so inconsistent with the good character, which St. Paul has given of Jephthah's faith, that it is not easy to conceive,

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how it came to pass, that such an opinion was ever entertained at all, much less how it became so general; especially as no historical passage of scripture has laid more open to the wanton jests of the insidel, or is more difficult to be explained by the sober believer. From these difficulties which the history now labours under, I trust, I shall be able to free it by shewing,

- I. That the opinion of her being facrificed is exposed to so many solid objections, that it is not defensible, and
- II. By proving from the history itself, that she was not facrificed.
- 1. And the first objection against the history's being explained in the common manner is this, that Jephthah could not have facrificed his daughter, though he had vowed to do it; because human facrifices were abfolutely forbidden by the law of MOSES. And Jephthah knew this; he did not only live in obedience to the law, but was also at that time the judge of it. And would he act contrary to his knowledge? Could he live in obedience to the law, and yet dispense with the breach of one duty, which Mofes had made indispensable? Or what an unjust judge would he be, who should undertake to punish the offences of others, while he himself was a most notorious offender? These circumstances, indeed, prove, rather that he ought not to have done it, than that he did it not. But,

Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah at the making his vow, as was upon Moses at the writing of the law; this clearly proves that he did it not: for the Spirit of the Lord could not give one law by Moses, and another opposite to it by Jephthah—he could not, whilst the first was still in force, direct any person to transgress it—the infallible spirit of God cannot contradict himself—nor can human facrifices be both lawful and unlawful at the same time—so that if the same spirit, which spake in Moses, directed Jephthah (as the text expressly says he did) in making his vow; then no doubt he did not sacrifice his daughter. But

3. Further, supposing he had offered her up, and pretended to be directed by the spirit of God, yet how came it to pass that he was never punished? To offer human sacrifices was made a capital crime by the law, and yet it is not fo much as hinted, that he fuffered death for what he did; nav, where does it appear that he was ever called to an account for it? And yet there was something fo particular in the offence, in the perfon of the offender, and in the time when he offended, that then the Jewish state ought not to have over-looked it; and God, who then prefided over it, was in equity bound not to spare such an offender. And if Jephthah under these circumflances was not punished, it is at least probable, nonW. that

that he did not deserve punishment, which yet he must have deserved, if he had facrificed his daughter. And,

4. These circumstances are further confirmed from the nature of the action, which was certainly immoral, and fuch therefore as Jephthah did not. There is nothing in which the general fense of mankind is more agreed, than that every man's life is his own property: This general fense arises from the natural principle of selfprefervation, it comes confirmed to us by the laws of all free nations, and is further ftrengthened by the laws of God: And that action which should break through all these laws must be immoral. But though the action be immoral, yet perhaps it may be faid, was Jephthah fuch a man as would not do an immoral action? St. Paul has here provided us with an answer, which fully clears up the character of Jephthah in this particular: for the most considerable circumstance in the life of this eminent judge, was the history before us: this was the most material action recorded of him in fcripture, and which placed his character in the most conspicuous light. Now St. Paul could not form a judgment of his life and character without confidering this his principal transaction; and in the 11th Chapter to the Hebrews, where he is celebrating the praises of those antient worthies, who did such great and excellent acts through faith, among others

others he mentions Jephthah, and the time, he fays, would fail, if he should set about praising him, and the other worthies, as they deferved. Such a commendation from an apostle was the highest honour which could be conferred: for praise is ever judged of according to those who give it, and that is the greatest praise which is given by them, who are themselves the most praise-worthy. What an high honour then was it to be commended by a St. Paul! certainly there could be nothing immoral in the character of Jephthah whom he thus commended, and yet the principal point of view in which St. Paul confidered him, that indeed which gives us the strongest proof of his faith, was the making his vow; which if he had fulfilled by facrificing his daughter, it must be confessed was an immoral action. And therefore if Jephthah could not facrifice his daughter without breaking through all those moral laws of God and man, which fay, "Thou shalt not "kill;" and if St. Paul when he confidered him in this light, could not have recommended him had the action been immoral; then it is evident, that Jephthah did nothing immoral in fulfilling his vow, and confequently did not facrifice his daughter. And

5. Besides, when he made his vow, he promised to fulfil it upon condition, that God would prosper him in the undertaking he had in hand; and can it be supposed but that Jephthah would word

word his vow with so much caution, as not to be obliged by it to do an immoral action? there are still extant proofs enow of his great abilities as well as faith, which clearly evince, that he was far from being either rash or weak, and yet he must have been both to a very great degree, if he could first have vowed to sacrifice his daughter, or afterwards thought himself obliged to do it, because God had given him success: in either of these respects he must have acted out of character; in the first, without his usual prudence, for which he is recommended; in the latter without his faith, for which he is celebrated. But still,

6. Whatever Jephthah was, yet God is perfeet; and how shall we vindicate the divine perfections, if he gave fuccefs to those means, which led directly to an inmoral end? The Spirit of God was upon Jephthah, when he made his vow -the hand of God enabled him to fucceedand it was this fuccess which obliged him to perform his vow. In these instances he was certainly under the divine guidance. And was it of God that he vowed to facrifice his daughter, or could God in any fense be the means of such a facrifice? These things cannot be. Far be fuch proceedings from the All-perfect. His goodness, justice, veracity, nay every divine attribute forbid us to think of it. So that if the perfections of God will not fuffer him to countenance

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tenance an immoral action, and if he did countenance Jephthah's vow by affifting him with his holy Spirit, and by giving him fuccefs, then certainly the thing he vowed was not immoral, and of course he did not facrifice his daughter.

Out of many more objections that might be urged, let these suffice at present, as it fully appears from them, that the account commonly given is not rational, is inconfiftent with the truth of scripture, and contrary to the history itfelf. Let us then feek out for fome other explanation, which may be fairly deduced from the words themselves; may be agreable to the reason of the thing, and consistent with the good character St. Paul hath given us of Jephthah; and fuch an interpretation I shall first lay down, and afterwards endeavour to establish, in order to

II. Prove from the history itself, that he did not facrifice his daughter.

The matter of fact was this: when the children of Ifrael were in great diffress by the invasion of the Ammonites, and had no captain who might lead them out to battle, the Lord raifed up Jephthah to be their deliverer; and, as it was common in fuch cases during the æra of the judges, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him to enable him to execute his office. And when he entered upon it, he made a vow unto the Lord, "that upon condition of " fuccess, whatever should meet him at his doors " when

" when he returned in peace, should EITHER " be the Lord's, OR offered up for a burnt " offering." This was the vow! and if it confifts of two diffinct fentences, as I shall presently fhew it does, then Jephthah will be found to have worded it with fo much caution, that he lay under no obligation to facrifice his daughter. When he returned and met his only child, the history represents him under great perplexity; but this did not arife from his concern to offer her up: there were other reasons. The text itfelf tells us, that it was losing all hopes of defcendants, losing the inheritance, which in default of heirs went to the nearest kinsman, and many other privileges which then fubfifted among the Jews, but have now ceased among us, that occasioned his grief: for we find, "that " fhe went with her companions, and bewailed " her virginity upon the mountains. And it " came to pass at the end of two months that " fhe returned upto her father, who did with " her ACCORDING TO HIS VOW WHICH " HE HAD VOWED;" i. e. according to the FIRST PART of the vow, he dedicated her unto the Lord, and in confequence of fuch dedication she continued the remainder of her life a wirgin: for, AFTER the vow had been fulfilled, the text observes-" She knew no man." Hereby the purpose of the vow was answered; from the time that she was dedicated unto the Lord, fhetuidity

the continued to the end of her days in an unmarried state: because, as the vow happened to fall upon her while she was in that state, she could not change it without causing her father to break his vow. This was the fact: whether it can be justified or not, is another question, which no ways concerns my present argument. It is sufficient for my purpose, that the text clearly afferts, she was, according to the words of the vow, to be dedicated to the Lord—was dedicated—at the time of dedication was a virgin—continued so some years afterwards—and therefore continued so till her death.

This was, indeed, a fingular case: the defign of it was fo uncommon, the reasons to justify it fo extraordinary, that no precedents can be drawn from hence for reclufes of any kind; it might easily be shewn to be a confutation rather of fuch practices, if that were within the defign of my present argument. But I wave this, and proceed to observe, that it was in her so remarkable an instance of filial piety, so evident a proof of her public-spiritedness, and love of her country; and these virtues were in her so eminent, in her condition fo illustrious, that the nation, in gratitude to her, made it a law, fo long as the lived, " for the daughters of Ifrael to " go yearly to MAKE PRESENTS to the " daughter of Jephthah, four days in the year." And here certainly I need not point out the abfurdity

furdity of going year after year to make prefents to a dead person, though the propriety of making them to one in her state must be manifest to every one.

This is the true interpretation of the history; and it is free from all the objections to which the common opinion is exposed. It only remains, that I support it by sound arguments; and the following, I trust, will appear to every one satisfactory. And,

1. The first is taken from the history not mentioning her being facrificed; and when the hiftory is thus filent, from whence can it be proved that she was facrificed? If there be any proof. it must be either in the words of the vow, or in the fulfilling it; but there is no proof in them: for there is nothing more faid in the latter, than that "he did with her ACCORDING TO HIS " VOW."-So that here we are referred to the words of the vow, to know what it was he did with her; and all that Jephthah vowed was ---" If the Lord would give him fuccefs, whatever " met him on his return in peace, should EI-" THER be the Lord's, OR he would offer it " up for a burnt-offering." Here it is plain, what he promifed in these words confists of two parts: for what met him and was to be dedicated to the Lord, was one thing; but what met him and was to be facrificed, was another:

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and it is certain these two things are distinct. Though every thing facrificed was dedicated to the Lord, yet every thing dedicated to the Lord was not facrificed. The incense-aromaticsvestments-and all the apparatus of the temple were dedicated to the Lord; but yet none of them were facrificed. The vow then confifts of two fentences, which mean two different things, and which do not follow in confequence-" whatever meets me shall be the Lord's, AND " I will facrifice it:" but the true construction is, "It shall be the Lord's, OR I will facrifice it;" for the particle used in the original, has the fense of OR, and the translators have so often rendered it thus, and have mentioned it even here in the margin of the bible, that no one can object to its being fo interpreted in this place, where the whole history fixes it to this fense. As the vow then confifts of two distinct parts, it would be kept by observing either of them---and as one thing Jephthah promifed mentions nothing about facrificing his daughter--- and as when he fulfilled what he had promifed, it is only faid, " he did with her according to his vow," then it is evident that the history is quite filent about her being facrificed; which as clearly proves, as any negative argument can, that she was not sacrificed. But.

2. This is still further evident from hence, that though Jephthah had vowed to facrifice whatever creature

meet

creature should first meet him, yet if a creature had met him which the law forbad to be offered up, 'tis certain he could not have offered it; and how then could he his daughter? If an unclean creature had first met him, would he have thought himself obliged by his vow to offer it up, when God had forbidden it? Certainly he would not. No vow can lay a man under any obligation to transgress the laws of God.

What then was to be done in this case? The law itself had provided a remedy. As the unclean creature could not be facrificed, it was to be ranfomed, and another allowed of for facrifice was to be offered up in its flead: and why ought not this rule to take place in the case of Jephthah? The fame law, which forbad offering up an unclean creature, forbad human facrifices. If a vow should fall upon an unclean creature, it was to be ranfomed--if it should fall upon an human creature, it was also to be ransomed-and God promifed to accept of one in place of the other. As I lay great stress upon this argument, and would have it carefully confidered, I must refer to the 27th chapter of Leviticus, where this point is fully treated of. Now Jephthah must have read this chapter. He could not but know that this was the rule prescribed in the law of Moses, and therefore though he had vowed to facrifice whatever creature should first

meet him, yet he was not obliged by this vow to facrifice his daughter; because by the law she was to be ransomed: and this eminent judge could not be ignorant, that it was lawful to ransom her, and absolutely unlawful not to do it. So that, put the case either way, the point is clear: either her father did include her in his vow, or he did not.—If he did, then she was to be ransomed.—and if he did not, then she could not be facrificed. And therefore this is another strong negative argument that she was not made a burnt-offering. But.

z. The evidence does not rest here. There are other arguments, which clearly prove that the was alive after her father had fulfilled his vow, and therefore of course she could not be facrificed: for the facred historian observes, as a confequence of the vow's being fulfilled --- as what followed upon her entering into it, that she continued a virgin all the rest of her life---" Her " father did with her according to his vow: " AND SHE KNEW NO MAN." But when? After she was facrificed? No. This remark would have been abfurd, when she was dead; whereas being a description of her after the vow was fulfilled, it must describe some state or condition she was in, even after the completion of the vow and in confequence of it-and this was her being or continuing afterwards a virgin. Jephthah,

Jephthah, as I before observed, was not obliged by his vow to facrifice her-his vow would be kept by dedicating her to the Lord---he did dedicate her-after she was dedicated, the facred historian remarks, that she remained a virgincan any thing be more plain or felf-evident, than that the, who remained a virgin, was also alive? Could fhe with any propriety be faid to be the one without being the other? Nav. if he had written purposely to prove her alive, could he have brought any stronger proof than this-" That from the day of her dedication she con-"tinued a virgin." This, therefore, I look upon as a positive argument, taken from the history itself, for her not having been facrificed. But

4. The history proceeds further, and afferts that she was alive at least some years after the vow was fulfilled. The words are-- " And it " was a LAW in Ifrael, that the daughters of " Ifrael went yearly (to lament as it is rendered, or as it is in the original) to MAKE " PRESENTS to the daughter of Jephthah the "Gileadite four days in a year." How the translators happened to mistake this passage, is not eafily to be conceived: for the word, which they here render lament, and which fignifies to make prefents, they have given the true idea of, in every passage but this and another. They have translated it by these Vol. IV. three

three words, reward, hire, gift. The use of it is very remarkable in the lxviiith Pfalm, 18th verfe, "Thou art gone up on high, thou haft " led captivity captive, thou hast received " GIFTS for men." Here they have rendered the same word GIFTS, which they have in the passage above made to signify lament. And gifts it does fignify--I have their own usage and authority to fay it does --- and, what is more, the authority of all the Lexicographers. To make presents is, therefore, the meaning of it in this place, and when these presents were made to her, fhe could not be dead. When the daughters of Ifrael went according to the laws of the land four days in the year to visit her, she must be alive. She was a recluse dedicated--therefore alive. The nature of the prefents, which they carried, shew, that she was alive. The intention of making them proves as much. does the fetting apart four days in a year to make them. The very thing speaks itself--She received these presents-therefore was not dead: and belides, by the law of Moses it was a crime to make them to the dead. And further, it was provided by a law, that these presents should be -made her yearly-but this law was contrary to the law of Moses, if she had been dead; and yet no censure is passed upon it-therefore she was living. And when these circumstances are confidered together, what further evidence would

any person require than this? That she could not be dead, who was visited four days in every year by the daughters of Israel, and had then such presents made her, as none could receive, but one, who was living.

5. And what greatly strengthens all these arguments, what demonstrates that she was alive long after the vow was fulfilled, is a proof taken from the facred historian's observing "that she " RECEIVED these presents. Four days in " every year the daughters of Ifrael made their " prefents TO the daughter of Jephthah"-they made them for HER USE AND BENEFIT: the particle used in the original does not only denote the dative case TO-TO the daughter of Jepthah; but frequently expresses something further. When spoken of two things, where one is faid to act upon the other, it denotes, that one was the cause of the other, and produced whatever action or condition the writer was then treating of: in this fense it is most elegant'y used in the first chapter of Genesis. When spoken of persons, where one is doing something to another, it often denotes that one did the action for the use and benefit of the other. This is a well-known idiom of the facred tongue; and the literal fense of the word, as well as the scope of the history, require that in the passage before us it should be thus understood. The phrase therefore expresses that the daughters of Israel X 2 made

made their presents "for the use and benefit of "Jephthah's daughter." For the use of one who was sacrificed? For the benefit of one who was dead? Could this possibly be? Certainly there can be no greater absurdity. The dead are out of the reach of our good offices: but she shared in them—presents were made TO her, therefore she must have received them—they were made for her use and benefit, therefore she was sensible of them—She received them, and was sensible of them for some years after the vow was sulfilled, therefore was for some years after alive, and of course was not sacrificed.

If this argument required any thing to add to its clearness and conviction, I might support it by other authorities; but it feems to me undeniably conclusive. I shall only mention by way of illustration two historical passages of heathen writers, in the grand lineaments of which there is fo great a refemblance of the prefent history, that I doubt not they took their origin from hence; I mean the vows of Agamemnon and Idomeneus. Their cases were almost the same as Jephthah's. A parallel might eafily be drawn between them to shew this; and if it could be proved (with some degree of probability I think it might' that both of them took their rife from his history, it would strengthen the interpretation I have now given of it: because if these were borrowed from it, and tradition had preferved 90869

ferved perfect the chief marks of likeness, this would be a probable reason that Jephthah's daughter was not facrificed. Neither of their daughters were offered up, though they were in parallel circumstances with his; and 'tis likely the tradition of her being saved was the foundation of their histories being so represented. And,

What tends ftrongly to confirm the opinion, that these histories were derived from Jephthah's vow, is an instance of the same fort of presents being offered to certain recluses in the heathen world; and it will be very difficult to affign any fatisfactory reasons for the origin of such a ceremony, unless we trace it up to the days of Jephthah. It was in all appearance a corruption of his history. Men retained the knowledge of the fact, after they had forgot the reasons upon which he acted, and this led them to engraft on it numerous errors. The practice of dedicating recluses without any obligation or necessity, must, I think, have had its original from hence. It took its rife from a groß mistake of this history. It could not come into the heathen world from reason-it was unreasonable; nor from nature-it was unnatural: there must have been some authority which at first seemed to countenance such a practice; and by length of time, and the corruptions of mankind, the cafe of Jephthah might be so much mistaken, as to Pitt.

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be made a precedent for that very error, of which it is a most clear confutation. Now if this custom among the Heathens came from Jephthah, it will greatly establish the interpretation of the text. This it will prove at least, that they who were dedicated, were not facrificed; and that they, who received certain prefents by virtue of fuch dedication, were indifputably alive. The Heathens made the same prefents to their recluses, as the daughters of Israel did in the case before us. This is abundantly evident from their own writers. And for what reason should they thus agree in this ceremony, unless it had been derived from one common cause? And so far as this is probable, it must be admitted, that if the Heathens offered these presents to none but them who were alive, then the who received the fame prefents was also alive. minds but marchine Aribs od daid w noun

I might have been more copious upon these arguments, but they seemed to me so plain and conclusive, that they needed not be further insisted on: and now the case hath been fairly stated, I leave it to every impartial man to determine on which side the truth prevails. The common-received opinion was, that Jephthah, according to his vow, sacrificed his daughter, but this opinion I shewed was not defensible: because human sacrifices were forbidden by the law of Moses, and Jephthah did not transgress this

this law; for he was directed by the Spirit of God in making his vow---he was never punished for it--he is commended for it by St. Paul---and had fuccess in confequence of it. And if the common opinion cannot be supported against these objections, much less against the arguments brought to prove that she was not facrificed--the historian has neither included her in the vow. nor in the fulfilling it--- and if she had been included, the law had provided a ranfom, whereby the vow would be kept, and she not made a burnt-offering. From these negative arguments I endeavoured to establish the true interpretation, which was fettled beyond all doubt from certain passages in the history, which gave her the attributes of a living person some years after her father had fulfilled his vow: and I think no truth can be more evident than this, that she could not be facrificed and dead, who still had the attributes of a living person.

Thus is the character of Jephthah vindicated, and neither rashness nor immorality entered into the making of his vow, or the fulfilling it: but this eminent judge appears to be distinguished for his faith and other virtues. The scripture also is cleared in this particular, and reconciled to reason and common sense: and this historical passage was recorded, as all scripture was, that the man of God might be perfect thoroughly surnished to every good work.

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PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES:

INTERPRETED IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. OLAVE's, SOUTHWARK,

OCTOBER 24, 1756.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH-WARDENS,
AND OF A GREAT PART OF THE CONGREGATION.

And you being dead in your fins, and the uncircumcifion of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses. Col. ii. 13.

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PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES:



GUTOBER 28, 1916.

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TO THE

CHURCH-WARDENS

AND

PARISHIONERS

OF

ST. OLAVE's,

THIS PLAIN

DISCOURSE,

MADE PUBLIC AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT IN CHRIST,

WILLIAM ROMAINE.

CHURCH-WARDENS

PARISHIONERS



DISCOURSE,

MARS PURLIE AT THEIR REQUESTS

is HUMBLY INSCRIBED.

BY THEIR PAINTED SERVANT TO CHRIST,

WILLIAM ROLLINE.

The very language of the Old Tellament is of this nature. Every word dauds for fome sanfills object and from thence raifes the idea of

fome coirespondent spiritual object. Since this is the genius of the Hebrew tongue, it is not to

PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES:

beauties of diction, as it hath been supposed, but hey are of the LINEXX of BETacred tongue;

their are not the operations of language, or

O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

ALL our ideas of spiritual objects are comparative, taken from matter, and carried up to fpinited In our present state we have no knowledge but what is first fensible, but what comes into the mind from fome of the fenses, and is borrowed from objects upon which they can make their observation. This is at present a received truth among the learned. Happy for us that it is received, because scripture knowledge is conveyed in this manner. God accommodates his inftruction to our capacities: he makes use of outward and sensible objects to explain inward and spiritual: he applies the book of nature to illustrate the book of grace, thus bringing heavenly things down to the level of our understandings, and setting them (as it were) before our eyes by their natural pictures and just fimilitudes and the honor grant strong

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The very language of the Old Testament is of this nature. Every word stands for some fensible object, and from thence raises the idea of fome correspondent spiritual object. Since this is the genius of the Hebrew tongue, it is not to be wondered, that it should so much abound with what fome call figures and metaphors; these are not the ornaments of language, or beauties of diction, as it hath been supposed, but they are of the effence of the facred tongue: neither is this method of using natural objects to give us ideas of spiritual the oriental way of writing, as we have been told, as if it delighted in bold figures and lofty metaphors; but it is the method of instruction, which man's present state renders necessary. While we are here in the body, we have no means of discovering spiritual objects but by divine teaching. God informs us, that fuch an object in the natural world stands for, and is the perfect representation of fuch an object in the spiritual world; and this kind of information he has given us in every Hebrew word: like a parable, it teaches and illustrates heavenly things under the expressive figures of earthly. And while men were accustomed to this method of instruction by the very nature of their language, one might expect it would run also into their compositions: which we find from fact that it has. The Old Teftament, the prophetical writings especially, abound with adT

with natural images; and the great prophet of the New Testament made such use of them, that without a parable spake he not unto the people. Wherever he was, the objects before him gave him an opportunity to spiritualize them--And this application of material things to illustrate spiritual, is what the scripture calls a parable. Of this kind are the words of the text. They are a parable in which the all-wife spirit teaches us the things of God, by comparing them to material and outward objects. The lesson he would teach us is of eternal moment; and may the Lord God take the veil off all your hearts while I am explaining this part of the Old Testament. May he give you to underfland it, and to profit from it, and to experience the truth of the whole parable in your own fouls.

The prophet gives us the literal fense in these words. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, "and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, "and set me down in the midst of the valley, "which was full of bones. And caused me to pass by them round about, and behold there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, fon of man, Can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God thou knowest. And again he said unto me, prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, "hear

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" hear the word of the Lord. Thus faith the " Lord God, unto these bones, behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall " live. And I will lay finews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall " live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. "So I prophecied, as I was commanded, and " as I prophecied, there was a noise, and be-" hold a flaking, and the bones came together bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo the finews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there " was no breath in them. Then faid he unto "me, prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, fon " of man, and fay to the wind, thus faith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O " breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they " may live. So I prophecied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they " lived, and flood up upon their feet an exceeding great army." add nie nymb am 151 bit

Now what inftruction are we to receive from this scripture. It was certainly applicable to the state of the Jewish church, which was then deprived of all its ordinances. It was carried away captive into Babylon, where it had neither a temple nor the presence of God, neither an officiating priest, nor a facrifice, and was as void of spiritual life as these dry bones were of animal

mal life---To the church in this state the application is made-God himfelf makes this use of it. " Then he faid unto me, Son of man, thefe " bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, " they fay, Our bones are dried, and our hope " is loft, we are cut off for our parts: there-" fore prophecy and fay unto them, Thus faith " the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will " open your graves, and cause you to come up " out of your graves, and bring you into the " land of Ifrael, and ye shall know that I am " the Lord, when I have opened your graves, "O my people, and brought you up out of " your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, " and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your " own land, then ye shall know that I the " Lord have spoken it and performed it, faith " the Lord."

In this fense the scripture was then sulfilled, when God did bring the Jews from their graves: he placed them in their own land, and restored the life of their civil and ecclesiastical policy. He performed what he had spoken, and they knew that he was the Lord their God. But is this the full sense and meaning of the parable? Are we to understand nothing more by it, than this outward completion? Are we to rest here? By no means. It is of more general use and instruction. We may all receive profit from it,

as I hope the following reasons will convince you. And,

First, We are assured by the apostle, that "no "scripture is of private interpretation." It was all written for the general use of the church of Christ, in all times and circumstances, therefore we may not yet rest in the private interpretation of this parable, applicable to the Jewish church in the Babylonish bondage, but we must look out for a more extensive sense, applicable to the catholic church of Christ: For

Secondly, We otherwise get no farther than the literal sense. It was a matter of fact, that God did bring the Jews after 70 years bondage up again to their own land. This is the letter of the parable. But the apostle forbids us to rest here. We must seek for the spiritual sense; "Because the letter," he says, "killeth, but the "spirit giveth life." And that we may and must attain the spiritual, which is the life-giving sense, he expressly teaches us, when he declares

Thirdly, That God's outward dealings with the Jewish church were a type and figure of his spiritual dealings with the christian church. For thus he says, I Cor. X. II. "That all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition." Among the rest, what happened to them in the Babylonish captivity was for an example to us, and this

parable treating of their state under it, and of their deliverance from it, was written for our admonition, and is to have its completion in us spiritually, as it had in them bodily.

These arguments may fuffice to prove, that this parable cannot be of a private interpretation, It has a spiritual as well as a literal sense, which belongs to us, which is to fet before us an example, that we are to follow, and from which we are to receive admonition and inftructions to our fouls. And it fets before our eyes fome of the great truths of the gospel in a most striking light. We have here an affecting representation of our loft and dead state, while we are in the bondage of fin, and of our happy revival to newness of life, when we are born again of the fpirit of God. These are the great out-lines of the parable, which may the divine grace deeply impress upon all your hearts, while I am giving you a short paraphrase upon the words, and then applying them as God shall enable me to each of your consciences.

The prophet begins with informing us, that it was the eternal Spirit who shewed him this vision. "The hand of the Lord (the power of Jehovah) "was upon me, and carried me in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones," even in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, where I saw sin and corruption reigning, and Y 2 where

where I beheld the fouls of men as dead in trefpasses and fins, as dead to God and to the things of spiritual and divine life, as dry and dead bones are to the offices of animal life. When the scripture speaks thus of the death of the foul, the idea is evidently taken from the death of the body: for as the body, when it dies, ceases to be actuated by the natural agents which carry on animal life; fo the foul, when it dies, ceases to be actuated by the divine agents, which carry on spiritual life. But this fpiritual death does not imply any diffolution or absolute infensibility; it only signifies, that the finful foul is cut off from all communion with God, who is the fountain of life; it is alienated from the life of God, and has loft its life of happiness in him, being now dead to his grace, as it may, ere long, be dead to his glory. And what then could be a more proper reprefentation of a foul thus dead in fin, than a body dead in the grave? And what could paint in stronger colours the exceeding deadness of a finful foul, than the exceeding dryness of the bones of a dead body? Under the death of the outward man the prophet was made to fee the death of the inward man. The spirit of the Lord gave him a full view of these souls dead in fin: " For he caused me," fays he, " to pass " by them round about, to go all round them, " and behold there were very many upon the " face

" face of the valley, and lo they were very dry;" their number was very great, and their condition was very dead; they had fo long, fo entirely loft all spiritual life, that the bones of dead men, from which the flesh is worn quite off, and which are become exceeding dry, were not farther removed from life, than the fouls thus dead in trefpasses and fins. After the prophet had gone all round them, " The Lord faid unto " him, Son of man, can these bones live? Is " there any power that is able to quicken them to newness of life? And I answered, O " Lord God, thou knowest"-Thou only knowest, what power is requisite to raise a soul dead in fin. All the powers in nature I am certain cannot do it. They can no more give life to a dead foul, than they can raise the bones of a dead man to life. Although this was the prophet's opinion, yet the Lord faid unto him, " Prophecy unto these bones, and say unto " them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the " Lord. Thus faith the Lord God, Behold I " will lay finews upon you, and will bring up " flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and " put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye " shall know that I am the Lord. So I pro-" phecied as I was commanded." He did not confult carnal reason which would have shewed him the absurdity of doing what God commanded; but he inflantly obeyed, and began preach-

ing to the dry bones, and calling upon them to hear the word of the Lord. Would not fome of you, my brethren, have taken him to be quite difordered in his head, if you had feen him preaching in a church-yard to a great number of dead dry bones? Would not you have thought Ezekiel as mad as any of our modern enthusiasts? For men reproach and ridicule the ministers of the gospel for doing the very fame thing that he did. We are reckoned visionaries and madmen, and what not, because after his example we preach the word of the Lord to the dead, When we tell finners, that they are all dead, dead to God, dead to grace, and may foon die to glory; and when we call upon them in the name of the Lord to awake from the dead fleep of fin, that Christ may give them life, then they may mock and ridicule. The fame men would have made as great a jest of the prophet, if they had feen him preaching to a congregation of dry bones. But he preached as he was commanded, and fo do we. Lord grant the fuccess may be the same. The blessed Jesus fends us to preach the word to dry bones, and we obey. He fends us out in his name, with his commission, and in his strength, and promifes to be with us by his Spirit. We should be enthusiasts indeed, if we thought ourselves able to awaken one dead finner without the effectual working of his power. We know,

that it is he who worketh in us and by us: for without him we can do nothing: and therefore let men reproach us for doing his work. We will go on, pitying, and praying for them, and the more they reproach us, the more we will preach, and the more earnestly, to the dead in fin-And who knows but as the work is God's, he may speak to the inward ears of the foul, while we are fpeaking to the outward ears of the body, and bid the finner awake and live. Glory be to his holy name, for that he often accompanies this foolishness of preaching with his divine power. Thanks be to him for fetting his feal to the truth of our words, by awakening the dead through our weak ministry. O that his good fpirit may now feal the word, and by his bleffing fulfil what follows in the parable-" So I prophecied as I was commanded, and " as I prophecied there was a noife," in the Hebrew a voice, namely, the voice of God. The prophet was speaking, and to say that there was a voice while he was fpeaking would be mere tautology, and unmeaning repetition, if we apply it to him. But if while he fpake the power of the Lord was prefent, then the drieft bones would hear; and if while we address ourfelves to the outward ears the voice of God carries the found at the fame time to the heart, then even the dead hear this almighty voice, and awake, and fee their guilt and danger, and begin Moff ...

begin to be concerned about their falvation. When the spirit of God speaks conviction to the heart, these effects always follow, and it is evident the voice was his from what is mentioned next in the parable; for as I prophecied there was a voice, and behold, a shaking-Behold, a matter worthy of the closest attention, there was a great shaking among the dry bones, even as it were an earthquake among them: for the word rendered shaking is the scripture term for an earthquake. And behold, there is as great a shaking in the foul of the finner, when he is awakened and convinced of fin; he that had been dead in fin, helpless and lost for ever in himself, then begins to quake and tremble—He fees the corruption of his nature-odious and abominable altogether-He fees his life was one continued fcene of open injury to God, and dishonour to his law-Looking back he beholds nothing but guilt-Looking forward he beholds nothing but everlafting destruction, upon which fear and a horrible dread overwhelm him. The holy Spirit fets home these convictions upon the conscience. He gives it such a fight of the guilt and danger of fin, that the finner fees he cannot fave himfelf. In this diffrefs he continues, until the remainder of the parable be fulfilled in him: for we read, that after the shaking---"The bones came together, bone to his bone. " And when I beheld, lo the finews and the hogen " flefh

" flesh came up upon them, and the skin co-" vered them above, but there was no breath " in them." Here is in the letter of the parable the outfide and shape of man--a body, but it is inanimate---there is no life in it. So in the fpiritual fense, if the foul should rest in the externals of religion, and fit down content with any thing thort of the vital influence of the Holy Spirit, there is no life in it. Whatever may promife to animate it, still it will remain dead. Good works, ordinances, orthodoxy, are but the letter that killeth, unless the spirit that giveth life, be in them. You may belong to the best constituted church upon earth, which has found articles and creeds like strong bones and finews, and flesh upon them, and which has a good liturgy, and decent public worship, like a fair skin to cover all; and yet in this communion your foul may be dead: for these external privileges cannot give the breath of life to the foul. " It " is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth " nothing," the flesh (the externals of religion) profiteth nothing unless the spirit animate them, as we learn from the next words in the parable. "Then faid he unto me, Prophecy unto the " wind and fay, Thus faith the Lord God, " Come from the four winds, O breath, and " breathe upon these slain, that they may live. " So I prophecied as he commanded me, and "the breath came into them, and they lived, and " ftood doidar.

" ftood up upon their feet, an exceeding great " army." Glory be to God for daily fulfilling this part of the parable. His good fpirit daily awakens poor dead finners, and puts the breath of divine life into them; and this he does by the weakest means, even by the foolishness of preaching, that it may appear the power comes from him, and that all the glory may return to him. He fends us out to preach, bids us call to the dead---We do as we are commanded; but we know that we could no more raife a dead foul from the grave of fin, than we could raife a dead body from the grave of corruption. We fpeak our Lord's word, and he bleffes them. He fends his grace along with them, and the dead hear his voice. They awake. They fee their guilt and their danger: at the fight of which their hearts fink within them---they find themfelves perifhing---and a great trembling and violent shaking seizes them. Fear is on every side. No way is left to escape, but to fly to the Saviour of finners. And as foon as they turn to him, he receives them gladly. He fends the Holy Spirit (the dearest pledge of his love) to give them evidence of their new birth unto righteoufnefs, and to affure them of their justification to life. Then they live unto God--and "fland " up upon their feet," being enabled to go forward in the ways of holinefs--- " An exceeding great army,"--an innumerable multitude, which

which no man could number, and they all hold fwords, being expert in war, a great army of the faithful foldiers of Jesus Christ fighting their way to a crown of righteousness, against all the opposition of fin and fatan, of the world and the slesh, and never quitting the field of battle, until the captain of their falvation place the never-fading crown upon their heads.

This is, I think, the fpiritual fense of the parable. We have in it, a description of man in his natural state as dead in trespasses and finsin his awakened state as unable to do any thing to raife himfelf from the death of fin to newness of life---and in his justified state, as raised to spiritual and divine life by Chrift, who is the life of the world, and by the effectual working of his good spirit. These great truths are beautifully painted in the parable. It fets them before our eyes in a very affecting manner. And I hope every one of you has been properly affected, according to the view he has had of the flate of his foul. But whatever impression has been made. I cannot leave the fubject, without making fome short practical remarks, and may the Almighty Spirit apply them to the necessities of those who are concerned in them.

And first, I have a word to the dry bones, to the dead in fin. We are all in this state by nature—dead in trespasses and sins—dead to God,

and to the things of God. If you believe the scripture you cannot deny this. It describes your fouls to be as incapable of performing any of the offices of spiritual life as the dry bones of a dead body are performing the offices of animal life. If God and his word be true, this is the condition of every one of us by nature, and it is the first work of grace to convince us of it. When the Holy Spirit begins to move in the finner's heart, he convinces him of his loft and helpless state, and he sees and finds that without Christ he can do nothing. And can every one of you fay from his own experience-I have had this conviction. If you had, then one step is taken---may he who hath begun, carry on the work, until he make you living members of Christ's mystical body. But if you was never yet convinced of your being by nature dead in trespasses and fins, then you are still alienated from the life of God: for you will not feek life from him, until you be convinced of your want of it. As transgressors, his holy law condemns you to death. The folemn fentence is past " The foul that finneth it shall " die." Did you never read this fentence as standing out against yourself? Have you never had any fense of the exquisite misery of being eternally separated from God the fountain of life? Have you no fense of it at present, no thought, no concern about being alienated in body and foul, and

and to all eternity, from God and his glory? Oh Almighty Saviour, if there be any perfons here present in this state, speak to the dry bones. They can hear no voice but thine. O let the all-reviving sound, which Lazarus's dead body heard, now be heard in every dead heart. Now Lord Jesus prove thyself to be the resurrection and the life. Call to every unawakened soul in this congregation, and say, "Awake thou that sleep-" est, and arise from the dead." O Almighty God and Saviour, send these words home to every dead sinner, that he may awake and be concerned for his salvation, and thereby may follow me in my second remark.

While the prophet was preaching, the voice of God spake to the heart, while he spake to the outward ears, and "behold there was a great " fhaking." The finner shook and trembled for fear. The Lord shewed him his former dead state. and his prefent danger, and at the fight of both an horrible dread overwhelmed him. He beheld the perfect purity and spirituality of the divine law-he faw the vile and loathfome nature of fin-he beheld the holiness, and truth, and juftice of God, armed with almighty power, and ready to deftroy him. Confcience witneffed against him, and haunted him with its horrors night and day. He found that hell was his defert, and he faw no way open to escape it. However hardened and obdurate he had been before.

before, yet all these circumstances put together set him a shaking and trembling. Had he been in an earthquake, when the ground heaved and tossed with such violent shocks, that he could not stand upon it, and had he seen it opening its mouth in many a hideous crack, and swallowing up multitudes all around him, he could not have shaked and trembled more. His soul fainted within him; and he had not a ray of hope lest, unless God would be pleased to stretch out his omnipotent arm, and to save him from going down to the pit of destruction.

And can every one of you, my brethren, remember when this was your case?, If you were never in any diffrefs, lefs or more, at the fight of your finfulness and mifery-Oh consider I befeech you your danger. You are still secure in sin, vea dead in trespasses and sins. When the holy Spirit is come to awaken your foul, his first work is to convince you of fin, and if he has not begun this work, fancy yourfelf to be alive --reform your outward life--become civil, and moral, and honest, yet you have not taken one step in the divine life; if you have never been deeply convinced of fin, you have not been stirred up nor shaken from the lees--your poor foul is still dead to the grace of God, and unless you be convinced of fin it will, ere long, be dead to his glory. But if you have been awakened, and convinced of fin, then the parable is fo far happily fulfilled

fulfilled in you. There has been a shaking among the dry bones. They have been trembling and quaking, and with great reason. Sinners while under conviction, have every thing to fear that is terrible. They have an offended God fet in battle array against them, a broken law thundering out its curfes upon their guilty heads, conscience owning the guilt, the devil ready to torment, and hell open to receive them: and if the profpect of these things be not terrible, what is? Am I now speaking to any of you, who fays, I am acquainted with these terrors---I have been made to fee my finfulness and my danger, and I find my helpless lost condition---dangers so furround me on every fide, that I know not whither to turn myfelf. Is this the language of thine heart? Art thou indeed shaken from all trust and confidence in felf? Then turn thee to the bleffed Jefus. He is a faviour for thee. Such as thou art he came to fave---fuch poor, loft and ruined finners. Wait on him. Be found in the ways of his ordinances, and he will fupply all thy wants. He will give thee freely out of his fulnefs, grace for grace, and glory to crown all his graces.

But, methinks I hear fome afflicted foul reply --- I have been waiting upon the Lord Jesus long, but have found no comfort. It may be so. But who is to blame? May you not have sought comfort in a wrong manner, by placing religion in the

form

form instead of the power, according to what is described in the third part of the parable: Where we have all the parts of an human body, but for want of breath there was no life in them, and this was written to shew, that you are not to stop short of Christ and his comforts, by resting in externals. You are not to be content with the form and the outfide of religion, without the life and spirit of it. And herein the parable condemns those persons, who upon their being first brought under some concern about their fouls, are apt to trust in duties, instead of going to Christ. They fet about reforming their outward behaviour, go to church, fay their prayers --- read the fcriptures --- give alms--- attend confantly at the facrament, supposing that these outward things can give life to the foul: they reft in them, as of themselves sufficient and meritorious, which is fetting them up against our Saviour, and resting in them as faviours, whereas Christ alone has life to give to the dead in fin. " I am the life," fays he. Whofoever is not united to him by faith, has no true spiritual life in him, as he found, who had more duties to depend upon than any of us have, and yet he counted them but drofs and dung that he might win Christ. " The life which I now live in the " flesh, fays the blessed Apostle, I live by the " faith of the fon of God;" it is a spiritual life derived from the fon of God, and received from him

him by faith, which is the breath of life in the justified foul, inspired into it by the holy Spirit, as the last part of the parable proves. The dry bones had come together, the finews and flesh had grown up upon them, the fkin was spread over all--here were all the parts of an human hody, but there was no life, until the spirit of the Lord put breath into them, and they lived, and stood up. It is the very same case with the finful foul. Nothing can give it life but the Spirit of God. He is to the foul what breath is to the body. He is fo much the breath of life, that in the Old Testament and the New the same word which stands for the breath that supports the life of the body, stands for the holy Spirit, who fupports the life of the foul. The air that we breathe, and the holy Spirit, have but one name in scripture. And therefore as the body is not alive, until it breathes, fo neither is the foul alive to God, until the holy Spirit infuse into it the breath of life. And as the body is alive only fo long as it breathes, in like manner the foul lives to God only fo long as the holy Spirit breathes in it. Let his influence stop, and the life of grace is at an end, as the life of the body is at an end, fo foon as its breathing is stopt.

My brethren, this is one of the most important truths in the Christian religion. It is the holy Spirit and his work upon the heart that makes

us Christians; " For if any man have not the " spirit of Christ he is none of his"---He is no Christian. So say the oracles of truth. If any man---be he ever fo moral and honest---a strict observer of outward duties, a good church man --- a charitable man, yet if he has not the spirit of Chrift, he is none of his---he is none of Chrift's family. He is not a living member of Christ's body. He may have a name that he liveth, but he is dead. And what good would it do you to have the name of a living man, if your body was dead? If you could neither ftir nor move, if your breath was stopt, would it be of any fervice to you, that men faid you was alive? Could their faying fo raife you to live? Infinitely more ufeless is it to have a name, that your foul liveth, while it is dead to God. Hear this, ye formal professors, who are destitute of the life and power of religion. You are but fo many dry bones. And what vast numbers have we of them in all our congregations! Oh that the Almighty Spirit may put the breath of life into you, and quicken you together with Christ, and make you sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

Perhaps you think you don't stand in need of his grace. Then, if God be true, you have no more life in your foul than these dry bones had, when they lay loose and scattered up and down in the valley. Until he put his life-giving Spirit into you, you are as dead as they were. Or per-

haps

haps you think you may have his grace, and not know it. That cannot be. The holy Spirit is the convincer of fin. When he awakens your conscience, fills it with conviction, and there is a shaking in every part and faculty, what a strange shaking would it be, if you should neither know it, nor feel it. So again, when he infuses into you the breath of life, and you live to God, what an unaccountable breath would this be, if having it and living by it, you fhould not know it? Did these dry bones know, when they were alive, and stood upon their feet? Most certainly they did. Do you know now, whether you breathe and live, or not? Just the same evidence has the foul of its being alive to God. "We know that we " are passed, says an Apostle, from death unto " life." We know the fame, fay all his difciples---We know that God hath given to us eternal life---We have his spirit the witness, the earnest of it in our hearts, and the world may fee the evidence of it in our lives and converfations.

But is not this, will fome fay, talking like enthusiasts? It is their very language. But then it is also the language of scripture. The Old Teftament is full of this enthusiasm---The New abounds with it. You can fcarce open the bible any where, without finding fome high flights of enthufiasm, something concerning being quickened by the spirit, being born of the spirit,

and raised up by him, being instructed and led by the spirit, having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the holy Ghost, concerning his dwelling in believers, and their having the witness of the spirit, and being sealed by him, and fanctified, and strengthened with might by him in the inner man. If thefe scripture-expressions favor ftrongly of enthusiasm, so does the liturgy of our church. Every day we pray to God that he would not take his holy Spirit from us, but would cleanfe our hearts by the infpiration of his holy Spirit, and would enable us by his holy inspiration, to think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding to perform the fame, would renew us daily by his holy Spirit, and grant us by the fame spirit to have a right judgment in all things: We pray to him to comfort us, even that we may rejoice evermore in his holy comfort, and that he may exalt us unto the fame place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before. No words can be ftronger than the petitions, which we have been offering up this very day at the throne of grace--" O God, forasmuch as " without thee, we are not able to pleafe thee; " mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may in all " things direct and rule our hearts, through Jefus " Christ our Lord. Amen." Such is the language of scripture, and the language of our church. They both speak of the holy Spirit, as the vital principle of the christian religion, fothat

that if you take him out of it, you leave its professors like a body without breath: for the holy Spirit is to their souls what breath is to their bodies, insomuch that they cannot live one moment to God without his continual inspiration. And surely it is not enthusiasm to say, that our bodies cannot live without breath, and how then can it be enthusiasm to say, that our souls cannot live without the holy Spirit, who is the breath of our spiritual life?

Since then there lays no objection against the doctrine contained in the parable. Since all men are by nature dead in trespasses and fins. Since nothing can raise them from the death of fin to newness of life, but the inspiration of the Almighty, and fince Christ has purchased life for the dead in fin, and the holy Spirit is to apply it and to guicken them, the discourse is now brought to a point. Only one question now remains, and that is, Has this parable been fulfilled in us? Can every one of us lay his hand upon his heart, and declare in the presence of God, " I know this scripture to be true by my " own experience. The spirit of God shewed " me my guilt and danger, at the fight of which " my unbelieving heart shook and trembled for " fear, but he gave me grace to refolve, that I " would feek Jefus, until I found him: On him " I was kept waiting, enabled to reject all hopes " in my own power or works until he put his " witneffing

" witnessing spirit within me, and I knew that " I was one of the children of God by faith in " Christ Jesus." Can every one of you say, that God hath dealt thus with your fouls? If he hath, happy are ye. In you this scripture is fulfilled. But if he hath not, it was written for your inftruction---to teach you, how God would deal with you, if ever he bring you to himself. O that his good Spirit may deal with you in the manner here described. That he may now begin, and carry on the work of grace step by step, until all the dry bones, until every dead finner be awakened, and hear the word of the Lord, until every awakened finner be pardoned and justified, and sanctified, and at last glorified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. May he who is almighty to quicken the dry bones, exert his power in quickening all this congregation to a life of grace here, and to a life of eternal glory hereafter. Grant this bleffed God and father, through the merits of thy fon Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the influence of the holy Spirit upon all our hearts now and for ever. Amen and Amen,

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AT

ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST,

AND

AT SEVERAL OTHER PLACES IN LONDON.

The Sin of Judah is written with a Pen of Iron, and with the Point of a Diamond; it is graven upon the Table of their heart, Jer. xvii. 1.

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MATTHEW XV. 19, 20.

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man.

ALL these evil things, which desile the man, proceed from the heart: here the desires are first formed, and from hence they slow out, and put in motion, and animate the other faculties. And such as the fountain is, such are the streams which slow from it. If the heart be evil and corrupt in itself, the thoughts of the heart will also be evil and corrupt, and the actions which are directed by these thoughts must also partake of their evil and corruption. For the heart thinks, resolves, and then acts; and if the thought be evil, the resolution and the act, which are the direct consequences of it, must be also evil. Nothing but evil can flow from an evil heart.

Whenever the scripture speaks of the faculties of the foul, it uses words borrowed from the faculties

faculties

faculties of the body, because we are not capable of forming any idea of spiritual, unless they be compared to material objects. The foul has its fpring and principle of motion as well as the body, and this we call the heart, borrowing the word from that part, which is known to be the fpring and principle of all the motions in the human frame: for from the heart proceeds that vital blood, which carries on every operation throughout the body, and from which every veffel and organ has its proper nourishment ministered. The heart has the same use and office in our little world, as the fun has in the great world, being the fountain of life and genial warmth, of growth and strength in the microcosm of man. And when we apply this word to the foul, we fix the fame meaning to it. The heart is that part which puts all the other faculties of the foul in motion, it is the fountain from whence our thoughts flow, and our refolutions and actions are only fo many streams, which take a good or a bad tincture according to the nature of the fpring, from whence they have their origin.

In this sense our blessed Lord here speaks of the soul: he makes the heart the fruitful cause of every vice, supposing it to be polluted even at the very sountain head; and how then is it possible there should be any thing but pollution in the channels, which issue from it? If the heart

be

be corrupt, fo will be the actions. From an evil heart nothing can proceed, but murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false-witness, and blasphemy: for when the principle which sets all these in motion is defiled, what can spring from it but defilement?

This is our Lord's doctrine, and never was there greater occasion to consider it, than in the prefent times, when these vices are grown to such an enormous height, that they are openly committed in defiance of all law, divine and human. The legislature has been lately alarmed at their prodigious increase, and has been trying to find out fome effectual remedy: but what has been hitherto attempted has not met with the defired fuccefs. Robberies, murders, &c. are still as common as ever, and will become daily more common, unless we strike at the root of the evil. The heart is the cause of all, and no act of parliament can touch the heart. It is out of the reach of every human tribunal. The vices which by our natural corruption have got into the heart, cannot be displaced by the wifest laws and edicts; these can only regulate the outward actions. The polluted fountain is still inaccessible to any authority but the great Creator's. He alone can give the Almighty fiat, let it be clean, and it is clean. Nothing can purify it from the unclean thoughts of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. but his divine grace and virtue; to which

which may he enable us now to commit the guidance of our hearts. We befeech thee to take them, O eternal fpirit, under thy gracious influence, and let no unclean thought enter into them, while we are meditating upon these words of our God and Saviour-" Out of the heart " proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

" fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies:

" these are the things which defile a man."

First, It is here afferted, that the heart, the fountain of all our actions, is polluted.

Secondly, The manner in which it became polluted is here plainly implied, and this will lead us.

Thirdly, To enquire into the means of cleanling and purifying it.

First, Our blessed Lord here declares, that the heart, the fountain of all thought and motion, is polluted. In its natural state it is entirely impure. It is the unclean residence of the soulest spirits, even of murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, and blasphemy. These are they which by nature dwell in the heart and defile the man: for corrupt nature is always disposed to receive fome one or all of these polluted tempers, as temptation shall offer. The propenfity to them is univerfal. Our church has accurately described this point in her ninth article.

" Original fin is the fault and corruption of " the nature of every man, that naturally is en-" gendered dondby

" gendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby

" man is very far gone from original righteouf-

" ness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil,

" fo that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the

" spirit, and therefore in every person born into

" the world it deferved God's wrath and dam-

" nation."

This was the opinion of our reformers, and if you find any difficulty in giving your affent to it, the arguments upon which they built it will, I hope, fatisfy you perfectly. The express testimony of the Creator of the hearts of all men, and the experience of thinking men from the beginning of the world to this day, were the chief authorities upon which they grounded their opinion. The whole scripture supposes man to be in a state of corruption, and several passages express the universality of this corruption. It is thus delivered, Gen. vi. 5. in the clearest terms. "And God faw that the wickedness of man " was great in the earth, and that every imagi-" nation of the thoughts of his heart was only " evil continually." Man does not here fignify any one man, or race of men, but mankind, the whole human nature, which is faid to be fo polluted with original wickedness, that every imagination, not one excepted, of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and continually too. What a fountain then of deadly poison is the human heart, fince all the streams which flow from it are evil,

and continually evil? The univerfal spreading of this malignant infection could not be expressed in stronger words, than to declare, that there was not one imagination in the heart, but what was evil, and always evil. Such is man in his natural state: And might not then the apostle truly say of it, Eph. ii. 3. "We are all by nature the children of wrath even as others: "for the scripture hath concluded all (men, both Jews and Gentiles) under sin."

This is the scripture account of the heart of the natural man, and experience confirms it. Men are in fact fuch as the scripture describes them, a race of fallen corrupt beings. We find none of them upright and perfect, no not one. That moral rectitude of nature, which fome metaphysical divines dream of, has no existence among the fons of Adam. Heathen writers as well as Christian prove it to be but a dream: for of the corruption of nature they all complain, and give us melancholy proofs of the prevalency of the vices mentioned in the text in every country and in every age. In the prefent age we fee and feel them: they are grown to fuch an enormous height at present, that they are become a reproach to our religion, and a dishonour to our laws. Not a day passes, but we hear of fome robbery, or murder, or adultery, &c. and the fountain from whence they all fpring is the heart. And can the heart then be clean

clean by nature, and yet fend forth fuch polluted streams? Certainly the same spring cannot send forth sweet water and bitter? That, which sends forth nothing but corruption, must be corrupt in its very origin. The peccant matter must be at the sountain head, and how rank and venomous it is we can have no doubt, if we will but open our eyes, and survey that deluge of wickedness, which now covers the sace of the earth.

It is certain then that the heart of man is by nature polluted. Scripture and fad experience forbid us to doubt of it; and yet against the evidence of these authorities there are some men, who call it in question, and who think they shew their superior reason by believing neither God, nor their own senses. What God declares to them they cannot but see is a matter of fact, and yet because they find some difficulty in accounting for the manner in which the heart became so polluted, they would therefore strangely inser, that it is not polluted at all. This is a very absurd conduct, but it is common to all unbelievers, and therefore it is necessary to speak to the

Second particular, wherein it was proposed to consider the manner, in which the human heart became thus polluted. None of the ancient philosophers, nor none of the modern reasoners have given us any satisfactory account upon this head. The origin of evil is a subject, which has

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been always debated in the schools of the infidels. and they have not yet produced any folution, which their own advocates are agreed to defend. How evil came into the heart is, upon the plan of their natural and metaphyfical religion, abforlutely unaccountable. And this is a good prefumptive proof in favour of the scripture account: for the heart is certainly polluted, and the greatest men among the ancient philosophers and the modern unbelievers have been able to offer nothing fatisfactory, neither to themselves nor others, concerning the manner of its pollution. But the scripture accounts for it thus in a plain intelligible way. Hale it will have a sublished in it is so of w

God created all things at first in a perfect state. When he had finished his works, he took a furvey of them, and pronounced them all to be very good. There was no pain in the natural, and no evil in the spiritual world. Man was innocent. His heart was right with God. The thoughts of it were clean and pure altogether. He knew no guilt; he had no fear; and therefore he was happy. character is in storaged that a revealed

The creature, who first introduced evil into the works of God, was the devil: for thus fays our bleffed Saviour, "The devil was a murderer " from the beginning, and a liar, and the father " of it," John viii. 44. In the beginning he murdered our first parents, by seducing them into that fin, which subjected their bodies to death, deen

and both their bodies and fouls to eternal condemnation. And he was the father of lies as well as of murder: for all was truth and innocence, until he offered the first lying suggestion to the heart, and basely infinuated, that God had maliciously forbidden our first parents the use of the tree of knowledge. To this infinuation they hearkened, they fuffered it to make an impression upon their hearts, and disbelieving what their gracious Creator and heavenly Father had revealed to them, they built their faith on the words of the lying spirit, and acted accordingly. Thus he deceived them, and in them all their posterity: for St. John, speaking of the great dragon, fays, "This is that old ferpent called the devil and " fatan, which deceiveth the whole world." Rev. xii. 9.

The consequence of our first parents being deceived by his lying infinuations was the loss of their innocence and happiness. With their innocence they loft the grace and presence of God: " For he is of purer eyes than to behold " the least iniquity," and after his divine grace and prefence were withdrawn, the heart was left to itfelf, and to its own natural workings, which under the tempter's management could produce nothing but murders, adulteries, thefts, &c. which are the corrupt fruits of a corrupt heart. And into whatever heart the divine. grace is not returned, the fame corruptions still Vol. IV. remain. Aa

remain, and we see the effects of them still breaking out in the same abominable vices: for the heart of the natural man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—so wicked, that sin is engraven upon it with a character, which no human art or power can erase. "The sin of "Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with "the point of a diamond; it is graven upon "the table of their heart." Jer. xvii. 1. And what hand can come at these impressions, which are cut so deep as to be incorporated into the very substance of the heart? What power can reach and desace them, but his alone, whose prerogative it is to search the heart and the reins?

This is the scripture account. And as it is most plain and rational, to which what can unbelievers object? They have nothing to substitute instead of this; and they can urge nothing against it, except they enquire, Why God should fuffer man to fall, if he forefaw that it would be attended with fuch dreadful confequences. But this is only asking, Why he made man a free agent? For if he was free, he must have a capacity to make a wrong, as well as a right use of his free will, and therefore he could not be placed in a state falling from which was impossible. That the first man was created with free will we have a most melancholy demonstration, the effects of which are still feen and felt all over the

the world, and that he had every affistance which could enable him to make a right use of his free will, the scripture gives us a full account: but he abused it. Upon which the affistance before given was withdrawn, and after this affistance was taken out of the heart, there was nothing left in it but its own sleshly desires and inclinations, and when these were spirited up by the lying suggestion of the infernal tempter, what could come out of such an heart, but murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, with all the other polluted works of the slesh and the devil.

Upon this state of the case it appears, that man loft by the fall the two chief bleffings of his spiritual life, namely, the image of God, and the spirit of God. Sin blotted out the image of God, in which man was at first created, and the scripture expressly declares, that we were afterwards born in the image of our father Adam with all his worldly defires, and corrupt inclinations, Gen. v. 3. And thefe the facred writers generally term The flesh, signifying by this word all the carnal appetites which govern man fince the fall, and of which the apostle declares, "That they who are in the flesh cannot please " God." Rom. viii. 8. Because while they are governed by the flesh, and not by the spirit, they continue in the image of the earthly Adam, and in the likeness of his fallen nature: by which Aaz they

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they are also alienated from the spirit of God. The divine and holy Spirit left the polluted temple of the heart, after fin had prophaned it. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity, and therefore he could not dwell in an impure heart; and upon his retiring, it became alienated from the life of God, being now a perfect stranger to all the graces of that spiritual life, which innocent man had always, and liberally enjoyed. And after the divine image was thus extinguished, and the divine spirit was gone, which the scripture expressly declares were the two fatal effects of the fall, then the heart of man was under the dominion of its own fleshly desires, and was ready to commit any of the abominable deeds of the flesh, whenever opportunity should offer, and inclination invite, and the devil strongly folicit to the commission of them.

Now every man who comes into the world is by nature in this state, and he will continue in it, until he finds the misery of it: until the sense of his distress force him to cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? This conviction of our misery is the first step towards a deliverance from it. So soon as we find ourselves sick, we are half cured: for if we can but bring ourselves to go with humility and prayer to the almighty physician, he has promised to give us freely every thing proper for our relief. He is both able and willing

to cleanfe the fountain of the heart from all its corruptions, which is the

Third and last enquiry I was to make: for though man be miserable in himself, yet God hath not left him without remedy. The great defign of christianity is to restore man to the state. from whence he fell, and by the fame steps, through which he fell. Sin put an entire stop to the divine grace and influence, which are as necessary to the foul as breath is to the body, and when they were withdrawn, the finner then loft the image of God, and the spirit of God: through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ the divine grace and influence are offered to us again, and whoever feeks them by humility and prayer, until he receive them, is then made a partaker of the spirit of God, who first makes the heart faithful and penitent, and afterwards justifies it by the blood of Christ, and fanctifies it by forming in it all the fweet and holy tempers of the bleffed Jefus, in which the image of God now confifts. And when the heart is thus created anew and regenerated, then is that great change perfected, of which the apostle speaks, I Cor. xv. " As we have borne the image of the first Adam, " who is of the earth, in like manner shall we " bear the image of the fecond Adam, who is " the Lord from heaven." And whoever is renewed after the image of this fecond Adam, he has a clean and a pure heart, and a fweet fountain

tain might as foon fend forth poisonous water, as this fanctified heart can produce murder, adultery, fornication, or any of the filthy works of the fieth.

This is the scripture account of the means of cleanfing the heart. The great purifier is Jesus Christ, whose blood has infinite merit to wash away the pollutions of the whole world. The holy spirit is the gracious agent, who purifies the heart with this all-meritorious blood. It is his office to take out by the iprinkling of the blood of Jefus all the guilt of our corrupt nature, and " to create in us a new heart and a right spirit," -the new heart bears the image of our merciful Saviour, and the right spirit is no longer alienated from the life of God, but lives in holy communion and fellowship with the holy Spirit. and thus the finner becomes a new man and a new creature. His foul is endued with a new fet of faculties and tempers entirely christian, and his heart, which was formerly the habitation of the foulest vices, of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. is now confecrated, and made an holy temple for the living God.

This is the only method, which the scripture has taught us, of cleaning the heart from those worldly and earnal tempers, with which it is by nature infected. If you refuse to believe the scripture, try any other method; but be assured you must come to this at last. Experience will bring you

to it. You will find, God grant you may find it in time, that nothing is able to purify the heart, but the blood of the Lamb of God, and that nothing is able to apply it to the heart, but the eternal Spirit. You will be the more fully convinced of this the more you try other things: fee first how far the boasted religion of nature, and its moral rectitude, and the fitness of things, and fuch like metaphyfical non-entities, can reform the heart--make your experiments upon the liberal arts and sciences-go through them one after another---ftudy books and men---try every thing that wit can invent or money purchase, and withhold nothing from your foul of all its defires-and then fit down, and carefully and impartially examine your own heart, and judge, how far all these worldly pursuits and attainments have reformed it. And what is the iffue? Are you really better? Do you find your heart more free from corruption than it was when you first set out? You will not, you cannot affert it: because reason and matter of fact are against you; they demonstrate, that our worldly tempers must be fed and encouraged by these worldly pursuits and attainments; for it is a glaring contradiction to suppose, that we can increase our fpirituals, by laying out all our time and pains upon temporals. Be therefore affured that the more you try these worldly things, the worse you will be; and the longer you try them, the

more difficult will you find it to be fet right. They have no virtue to take one fingle vice out of the heart, but as they fall in with our corrupt inclinations, they must encourage and strengthen every vice, which is in the heart. If you try all the powers upon earth, you will find by experience, that the heart is out of their reach, and at last, if ever you see the face of God with joy, you must conclude, that there is nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, and the operation of his good Spirit, which is able to cleanse your polluted hearts, and to renew a right spirit within you.

Thus it is abundantly evident from experience, that nothing can purify and take away the natural pollutions of the heart, but the blood of Jefus Chrift sprinkled upon it by the holy Spirit. This is the only gospel method. And it is able to purify by faith and take away all these pollutions, which nothing else can: for its power is also abundantly evident from experience. It has been found effectual, after all other methods have failed. It has been tried ever fince fin first entered into the world, and has ever fucceeded. And this fingle circumstance seems sufficient to recommend it to the minds of all ferious perfons, and to determine them to receive it as the fovereign remedy of their natural corruptions. We have in the first ages after Christ a particular account of the great change made in men's hearts

upon their embracing the gospel. And thefe accounts are fo well attested, that if the strongest historical evidence can gain your affent, they will appear to you full and decifive. I remember to have feen a passage in Lactantius, where in his apology for the Christians of his time, he has these words, "Give me a man (fays he to " the heathens) who is passionate, malicious, " headstrong, with a few gospel precepts, I will " render him as meek as a lamb. Give me one " who is covetous, I will foon perfuade him to " be liberal and charitable. Give me one " who dreads afflictions and death, I will make " him run and court martyrdom. Give me an " unclean, intemperate, unjust, cruel, finful " wretch, I will, by the knowledge of Christ, " and by the influence of his laws, render him " chafte, fober, merciful, innocent, and holy." Lactantius had good reason for what he here asferts: he had feen the gospel of Christ take these vices out of men's hearts, and we have feen the same happy effects of it in our days; not indeed in fo great a number, but, God be praifed for it, we have enow to demonstrate to any unbeliever, that the fame gospel has still the fame power. You do not fee fo much of its power, because you do not hear so much of the gospel. But wherever the pure gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and men receive it with faith, there experience daily confirms what Lactantius

long ago observed. You still see it work the fame real change in men's tempers, which cannot arise from any heat of fancy, or flight of enthusiasm, or sudden rapture of devotion, because it is a fober, regular, thorough change, that reforms the heart, and all its affections, and influences the whole behaviour, rendering a man confident and uniform throughout the whole course of his future life. That fuch changes are wrought at this day is an undoubted matter of fact. Sinners, and great finners too, are brought to fee the error of their ways, to forfake their wicked courses, to lead a new life, to follow the commandments of God, and to walk from henceforth in his holy ways. This is an entire, a total change. When a finner becomes a Christian, he is absolutely a new creature and a new man, infomuch that you may truly fay of him, "old " things are passed away, behold, all things are " become new:" for he neither thinks, speaks, nor acts, as he used to do. He has a new set of fenses and faculties. He neither sees things in the fame light he did before, nor hears after the fame manner. What formerly pleafed him, now displeases. The very end of all his pursuits is changed, and his happiness is placed on a different object. We see this perfect change produced every day, when the gospel enters into any man's heart. As it takes possession, the corrupt passions retire. The holy Spirit purifies the

the fountain, and then all the streams run pure. It is evident, that he has given the heart a new nature, because what proceeds from it is not influenced by the natural man. All is renewed. The murderer is humane and loving, the fornicator and adulterer are chaste, the thief is honest, the false-witness true, the blasphemer a christian. Such is the glorious change, which the holy Spirit makes when he sprinkles the heart with the all-purifying blood of the Lamb of God.

And now we have discovered the cause of the evil, and its remedy. The heart of every man we find to be by nature corrupt, destitute entirely of divine grace, and disposed as temptation shall offer to commit any wickedness: for from this fruitful fountain, from the heart of the natural man, proceed murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, perjuries, and blasphemies. And nothing but the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus can dry up this fountain of fin, and nothing can carry the virtue of it to the heart but an almighty spirit. Human laws, which are the only expedient lately attempted, cannot come at the head and fource of this corrupt fountain. It lies too deep. Their power cannot reach it, and much less purify it. An act of parliament can only regulate the outward behaviour. It can take no cognizance of a crime, until it break out into some overt act, and therefore it can have

have no influence over the heart. If murder, adultery, robbery, &c. be in the heart, there all statute laws leave them; and the inclination only waits for a fair opportunity, which it will always embrace, whenever there is a prospect of escaping the lash of the law. Thus no fin is hereby prevented. Only the commission of it is rendered more private, and the heart is put upon inventing schemes, how it may gratify itself in its pleasures, without incurring the pains and penalties, which the law threatens to inflict. By this means the corruption that feems to be diminished in the channels, gathers and increases at the fountain-head, where the more it is stopt, the more it ferments and pollutes itself. Since this is the case, what reformation can we expect from the interpolition of human authority? Suppofing the legislature should follow his majesty's gracious instructions from the throne, and try to find out some new laws for putting a stop to robberies and murders, yet experience would foon prove them to be ineffectual. All the human laws, which ever were made, or ever will be made, cannot reform one fingle person, because they cannot reach the heart. Gospel and not law should be here employed. The gospel can take fin out of the heart, but the law can only make the commission of it more private. The clergy therefore should be called upon, and not the magistrate. This is under God, the peculiar 5 Jan

peculiar business of the ministers of the gospel, and it is I fear owing to their great neglect of their duty, that robberies and murder are become fo common. Our people grow more corrupt in their morals, not for want of good statute laws, but for want of good gospel ministers. For it is certain, that the gospel, and nothing elfe, can take murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, &c. out of the heart, and it is as certain, that the gospel has taken them out of the heart, wherever it has been properly received: and therefore either in the manner of applying the gospel, or in not applying at all, there is a great failing fomewhere or other among us. God Almighty grant, that they who are guilty may fee their error, and may have grace to repent and amend. is the province of hit : notice 1900 all

And now let me intreat you, my brethren, to pray that these truths may make a proper impression upon your minds. You have heard me labour this point much of late. It appears to me to be the most important in christianity, and therefore in several discourses I have been endeavouring to give you a just sense of your state and condition by nature. What success they may have met with depends upon God, whose blessing upon them I do most sincerely implore. All our preaching can do nothing to you hearts without his grace, and I beseech him that, out of the riches of his infinite love to sinners, through

Jefus Christ, he would be pleased to let you see your own hearts: for until you behold that desilement and corruption, in which the heart of every man lies by nature, you will see but little necessity for a Saviour. And this divine grace I hope he will now send into all our hearts, that you may be disposed to receive favourably, and to prosit by, two short remarks, with which I shall apply the doctrine, first, to them who do not believe it, then to them who have given their free assent.

If any of you do not believe the doctrine, you are in a very dangerous fituation, because you are on the very brink of destruction, and yet do not fee your danger. Can you think your heart is not corrupt? This very thought demonstrates its corruption: for finners you certainly are, and all fin comes from the heart, and can the heart fend forth a whole life of fin, and not be finful itself? This is impossible. To believe such an impossibility argues a most dangerous state of mind. A man does not cheat himself more, who fancies himself to be in good health, when he has been long ill, and is just dying, than he who fancies his heart to be pure, although every thing that flows from it is impure. This is one of the greatest delusions of sin. It lulls the finner into a state of security, and tempts him to believe, that his heart is pure and without spot, although it be nothing but corruption and deformity:

mity. Whoever is tempted into this belief does not know himself. And if any of you have fallen into this fatal error, I pray God to let you know yourselves: for you are as yet perfect strangers to your own breasts. If you were to see them naked and open, with all the little lurking places, where self-love and vain-glory conceal your failings, the moment you beheld the horrid sight, it would force you to cry out, "Jesus, master, have mercy on me." Oh! what a blessing would it be, if you could now speak these words from your hearts. I hope you will. And may the Lord God of heaven shew you, what you really are by nature, and then make you what you ought to be by grace.

To you, who believe the doctrine, I need not use many words, because you are convinced, that the heart is a polluted fountain, from whence all vices fpring, and that nothing can purify it, but the blood of the lamb of God sprinkled upon it by the Holy Spirit. This is the firm belief of every christian. I hope you know it to be true, both from scripture and from experience. You find that the fountain has been cleanfed, because the streams run pure. Your lives and actions shew, that God has created a new heart, and has renewed a right spirit within you, and it is your whole care and study to keep this new heart clean and holy. But whenever you find any defilement beginning to arife, even in thought, immediately

immediately fend up your prayers to God. Intreat his grace to keep you from the pollution of fin, and if you always make him your refuge and strength, constantly feeking him in the ways of his ordinances, then his Holy Spirit will keep out of your hearts all those corruptions, which defile the man, and your Lord Jesus will so purify you by his infinite merits, that you shall be presented before God the father without spot of fin unto salvation. Blessed Lord and Saviour carry these truths to all our hearts; accompany them, we intreat thee, with thy blessing; and keep our hearts pure by thy grace, until thou bring them safe unto thy glory. Amen.

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ON

THE BENEFIT

WHICH

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

IS OF TO MAN,

IN HIS

YOURNEY THROUGH LIFE;

PREACHED AT

CHRIST-CHURCH, IN NEWGATE-STREET,

On Whitsun-Monday, May 19, 1755,

PURSUANT TO THE

WILL OF MISS ELIZABETH HILL,

LATE OF FALMOUTH, CORNWALL.

The fruit of the spirit is in all Goodness .- EPH. v. 9.

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PREFACE.

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MENDER WAR

THE following discourse was drawn up at the request of Miss Hill's executor, to whom I am greatly obliged for appointing me to preach on Whitfun-Monday, agreeably to the words of her will, on the benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to man in his journey through life: And what I thought myfelf bound in duty to deliver from the pulpit, I have fince been perfuaded to fend from the prefs; for although it contains nothing new either in the matter or manner, yet I think it incumbent upon me to bear my public testimony to the great doctrine of christianity here inculcated. I am prepared for the reception it will meet with, not only from the monthly reviewers, the avowed enemies of the established church, and its established doctrines, but also from all mere nominal B b 2 Christians.

Christians. But let them ridicule it ever fo much as Hutchinsonian Enthusiasm, yet since it is expressly taught in scripture, and maintained in the clearest manner by our church, it will give me no concern to be reckoned an Enthusiast, while the scripture is on my side, or an Hutchinsonian, while the Church of England supports me; and if men will call the plain doctrines of scripture Enthusiasm, and will treat the articles, and homilies, and liturgy of our church as Hutchinsonianism, I hope I shall live and die a Church of England-Hutchinsonian-Enthusiast.

rear I thought my if bound in duty to deliver from the paroit, I have since beau perfusion to fend from the prefs; for although it contains nothing new either in the matter or manner, yet I think it incumbers apon me to bear my public tellimony bent apon me to bear my public tellimony to the, great doctrine of christianity here inculcated. I am prepared for the reception it will meet with not only from the mouthly reviewers the avowed enemies of the established church, and its established church, and its established doctrines but also from all more nothing.

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HOLY SPIRIT.

EZEK. XXXVI. 25, 26, 27.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your sless, and I will give you an heart of sless. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

OUR bleffed Saviour shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of his apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and being assembled together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard

of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the holy Ghost, not many days hence. And according to his most true promise, the holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven, with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of siery tongues, lighting upon the apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth, giving them both the gifts of divers languages, and also boldness with servent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error, into the clear light and true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This is the subject of the present festival. We are here affembled to commemorate the gifts and graces which the holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles, and to bless God for our interest in them. The fame Spirit is still with us, and will abide with us for ever. He is with us, not to bring the world over to the outward profession of christianity; for that is already effected, and the extraordinary powers, which were necessary to effect it are ceased. Christianity is established, and outward miracles are no longer needful to be the outward proofs of it. But the holy Spirit has still the same inward work to carry on, which he had in the apostle's time, and it requires the same degree of divine and almighty power, although it be not exerted

erted in outward miracles. The mind of every man is by nature in darkness and ignorance, blind as to the things of God; this he has to enlighten with faving truth. The will and all the affections are depraved, and it is his gracious office to incline and dispose them to comply with the will of God. And after the understanding is enlightened, and the heart renewed, we have still no power to walk in the ways of holiness, without the special grace of the holy Spirit, whose guidance is necessary every moment, and for every thought, and word, and work. These are called the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, not as if they were less divine, or any thing short of the almighty operations in the apostolic age, but because these were extraordinary, given for a certain fixed time, to carry on a particular work, but the former were common to all believers, to the apostles themselves as believers, and are to be the ordinary gifts and graces of every christian unto the end of the world. And whoever has received these ordinary operations, has in his own heart clear and full testimony of the Godhead, and almighty power of the bleffed Spirit. He wants no outward miracles. This great inward work is to him complete evidence; and he is able to rest his salvation with as full trust and confidence upon it, as if he had feen the apostles exert their miraculous gifts and graces. May

May the Lord and giver of all grace be pleafed to bestow upon you this inward witness, and may he enable you to look up to him for it while I am,

First, Illustrating these truths from the prophet's authority in the text, and then

Secondly, Applying them to your spiritual use and benefit.

And by the confideration of these two particulars, I hope to be able to answer the good purposes of our present meeting. We are called together by the will of a late charitable and pious lady, who appointed a fermon to be preached upon this day concerning the "be-" nefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to " man, during his journey through this life." The fubject is fuitable to the great festival, which the church now celebrates, and the words which I have read contain a clear and full account of the benefit we receive from the holy Spirit from the beginning to the end of our christian life. " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye " shall be clean, &c." The clean water was to be sprinkled upon them to cleanse the foul; this effect is here ascribed to it; but water cannot reach the foul, or if it could, yet it was not able fo to act upon it, as to cleanfe it from any finful filthiness. But the Spirit of God acts upon our spirits, as water does upon the body, and therefore it was the outward and visible fign of his

his inward and spiritual grace in the Old Testament, as well as the New. The phrase of fprinkling clean water to cleanfe them from fin refers to the legal ablutions, and more particularly to the great typical purification for fin, of which we read Numbers xix. The ashes of the red heifer, which was burnt without the camp, were to be mixed with pure running water to be a purification for fin, and whoever contracted any legal uncleanness, and had not this finwater sprinkled upon him to purify himself, that foul was to be cut off from among the congregation. St. Paul has applied part of this fervice to our Lord's fuffering without the gate, Heb. xiii. 11. 12. 13. and St. John has applied the other part, vii. 38, 39, where upon Christ's defcribing the rivers of living water, which should flow from believers, he fays, "But this he " fpake of the spirit," he spake of water as the known emblem of the Spirit, and the christian church has always used it for his emblem in the facrament of baptism, wherein his grace cleanses to the purifying of the foul, as water cleanses to the purifying of the flesh.

Water then is the instituted type of the holy Spirit, and pouring out water to cleanse, is, in the scripture manner of expression, pouring out of the holy Spirit to cleanse the soul; and his cleansing grace must be the thing here spoken

of, because it was to purify them from all sin. " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye " shall be clean, from all your filthiness and " from all your Idols will I cleanse you," from all the filthiness of fin, and from all the guilt of idolatry I will purify them. Sin polluted all the faculties of the foul, and my good Spirit shall cleanse them all. The understanding he shall purify by removing its natural blindness, and by opening their eyes to fee the error of their ways, that they may be brought to Jesus Christ for salvation, and may have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience with the all purifying blood of the lamb of God, which will justify them, and may have grace and power to walk in the flatutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, which will fanctify them; and thus he cleanses all the faculties: for it follows in the fecond verse of the text, " A new heart also will I " give you, and a new spirit will I put within " you, and I will take away the stony heart out " of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of " flesh." The cleaning of the heart is the greatest work of divine grace, because there is in every finner hardness, and an impenitent heart, which no human power can foften. The fcripture speaks of it in the strongest expressions, "The fin of Judah is written with a pen of " iron, and with the point of a diamond, it is " graven upon the table of their heart;" and what

what power is able to erafe this deep engraving, except the almighty God, who declares, "I " will give you a new heart," renewed in all its faculties, " and a new spirit will I put within " you," endued with new appetites and new affections, " and I will take away the stony heart," the refreshing streams of my grace shall foften the old hardened heart of fin, which would take no good impression, " and I will give you an " heart of flesh," foft and pliable, yielding to the motions of my grace, and willing to have the law engraved by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And after the heart and the affections are thus renewed, and disposed to love the will of God, the Holy Spirit was fill to proceed, and to go on in the work of factification, in which his grace is abfolutely necessary. Even after the stony heart is taken out, we still want his guidance, and whenever he leaves us to ourfelves, we cannot take one step in our journey towards heaven. And therefore God promifes to them, who had a new heart, " that he would put his Spirit within " them, and cause them to walk in his statutes." His Spirit should be their guide, both to lead them into the way of God's commandments, and to give them strength and power to walk in these ways fleadily unto the end: for the light of nature could never direct finners into the paths of God's commandments, nor could the best natural

tural abilities go forward in them, unless God should put his Spirit within us, and give us power to walk in his statutes. We want his support every step we take throughout the whole work of sanctification. If we go forward, he is the cause. He gives us both the will and the power; for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. It is the Spirit of God within us, who causes us to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them.

And thus the prophet has taught us of what benefit the holy Spirit is to man during his journey through this life. We cannot fo much as fet out upon our journey to heaven, until he cleanse all the faculties, by removing the blindness of the understanding, and the depravity of the will and affections. It is his office to give us a new heart and a new spirit, disposed to receive impressions of the divine law, and then to endue it with power to walk in the statutes of God, and to keep his judgments, and to do them; fo that every step we take from the first moment we set out, until we happily arrive at the end of our journey, is directed and supported by the holy Spirit of God. This is the prophet's doctrine, which I come towed bus the out med out

Secondly, To apply to your spiritual use and benefit. And if we make a right use of it, we must not only endeavour to be convinced of its truth,

truth, but also to find the power of it operating upon our lives and conversations; for it would be to no purpose to believe, that the holy Spirit is the author and finisher of the whole work of grace, if this belief should rest unoperative in the head, and never dispose us to feek the experience of it in the heart, and in the rest of the faculties. Since his grace is to cleanfe us from all the pollutions of fin, and to create in us a new heart, and to renew a right fpirit within us, and to give us power to walk in the way of God's commandments, let us not hear these truths as mere speculative points, but let us suffer the conviction of them to operate in our lives, and to carry us to feek our own interest in them. And I hope the bleffed Spirit will render profitable to these good purposes what I have to offer concerning the usefulness of his guidance throughout the journey of life.

Sin polluted the whole man, and made every part and power unclean and abominable altogether, and the prophet ascribes to the holy Spirit the whole work of cleansing the soul. His grace is necessary to purify every faculty. He begins with removing the darkness of the understanding, and enlightening it with all-saving truth, of which by nature we are ignorant. Sin rendered us incapable of seeing spiritual objects. It did not entirely destroy the organ of sight, but it entirely stopped all communion between it,

and the fountain of light, and brought the foul into fuch a state as the body would be in, if the fun was blotted out of heaven, and the moon and ftars were no more to reflect their enlivening rays upon the earth. This would be a most uncomfortable and heavy night, in which although the bodily organ of fight remained, yet these outward objects would be as invisible, as if the organ was quite destroyed. And fin produced the fame effects in the spiritual world. Every fon of Adam is in darkness and the shadow of death, until the holy Spirit of God enlighten the eyes of the understanding. St. Paul's account of the Gentiles is this (Eph. iv. 18.) "they had the " understanding darkened, being alienated from " the life of God through the ignorance that is " in them, because of the blindness of their "heart." Sin darkened the understanding and alienated them from the life of God, by separating them from that divine light, which is the principle of their spiritual life, and therefore they lived no longer unto God, but were cut off from all intercourse and communion with him, In this state of darkness and blindness we all continue, entirely ignorant of the things of God, until his good Spirit manifest them unto us. The natural understanding in its highest refinement cannot discover them; "for the natural " man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of "God, for they are foolishness unto him, nei-" ther

" ther can he know them, because they are spi-" ritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The natural man cannot receive spiritual things. God must reveal them unto him by his Spirit, before he can have the least discernment of them, even what is revealed concerning them in fcripture cannot be discerned, until the holy Spirit open' the eyes to behold it. And under the fense of this truth the prophet thus intreats God. " Open " thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous " things out of thy law," Pfalm cxix. 18. to open the eyes to behold them was the work of God. And again he prays, " Give me under-" standing" (it was the gift of God) " that I " may learn thy commandments. I am thy fer-" vant, give me understanding, that I may know " thy testimonies," Pfalm exix. 73, 125. And to the same effect St. Paul prays for his Ephesians, that the God of our Lord Jefus Christ the Father of glory would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, " that the eyes of their understanding might be " enlightened." This was the work of God. He was to give unto them the Spirit, and the Spirit was to give them wifdom, and to reveal the knowledge of God to them, by which means the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened.

This is the doctrine of scripture; and I may confirm it from an authority, which I esteem next

to the word of God, and that is the fense of our church upon this point. In the collect for the 5th Sunday after Easter she teaches us to pray, " O Lord, from whom all good things do come; " grant to us thy humble fervants, that by thy " holy infpiration we may think those things " that be good, &c." We cannot fo much as think a good thought, unless we have the holy inspiration of God: and again on the 9th Sunday after Trinity we pray, "Grant to us, Lord, we " befeech thee, the spirit to think and do always " fuch things as be rightful, that we who can-" not do any thing that is good without thee, " may by thee be enabled to live according to " thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord." To the same purpose we read in the third part of the homily for Rogation week. " Let us meekly " call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, " to inspire us with his presence, that we may " be able to hear the goodness of God to our " falvation. For without his lively inspiration " can we not fo much as speak the name of the " mediator. No man can fay, that Jesus is the " Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Much less " should we be able to understand these great " mysteries, that be opened to us by Christ. " For we have received, faith St. Paul, not the " spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of "God, for this purpose, that we may know the "things which are freely given to us of God. " In

" In the power of the Holy Ghost resteth all abi-

" lity to know God and to please him. It is he

" that purifieth the mind by his fecret working.

"He enlighteneth the heart to conceive worthy "thoughts of Almighty God." These authorities are clear. They expressly declare, that we cannot think such things as be rightful without the holy inspiration of the Spirit of God. These are the sentiments of scripture, and of the Church of England, concerning the first step we are to take in our christian course.

By removing the darkness of the natural understanding, and by enlightening it with allfaving truth, the holy Spirit enables us to fee the way to heaven, the next step is to dispose the will to walk in it: for after we fee the right way, yet we have no defire to walk in it, until he renew the heart. It is the work of his grace to incline the will, and to dispose it aright, that it may confent to the will of God: for our wills are by nature corrupt. The will of the flesh is opposite to the will of God; and our affections are fo depraved, that they choose only evil, and continually. " And God faw that the wicked-" ness of man was great in the earth, and that " every imagination of the thoughts of his heart "was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. And this continually evil heart is also obdurately evil. It is ftony and rocky, harder than adamant. All the powers in nature cannot foften it. Sin has rendered it incapable of any good impression, VOL. IV. unless

unless it be made by an almighty arm. He alone who created the heart can make it relent before him. To foften an hardened heart is as great a work as to create a world, and therefore the prophet prays, " create in me a clean heart, " O God, and renew a right spirit within me." To create, is to make a thing out of nothing, and the fame creative power which brought the heavens and the earth out of nothing is necessary to create in the finner a clean heart: for to cast him in a new mould, and to make him a new man, is harder than to make him a man at first; because nothing opposed his creation. God fpake, and it was done. But the heart, which was conceived in fin, has lived in fin, and has loved fin, and placed all its affections upon it, has an utter aversion to this new creation. And what power is able to take the love of fin out of the heart, and to render it willing to be made pure and holy? Say, who is equal to this great work? Certainly, no created power. He alone can do it, who turneth the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well. He can do it, and he has promifed, " I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit " will I put within you, and I will take away " your stony heart, and I will give you an heart " of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you." My Spirit shall work this great change. He shall take the hard stony heart out of you, which is altogether finful, and shall enable you to delight in the

the law of God in the inner man. And thus he renews the heart, "for we are faved by the "washing of regeneration, and renewing the "Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.) And

This is the language of our church. On Christmas day we use these words, "Almighty "God—grant that we being regenerate, and "made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy holy Spirit, &c." And again on the 19th Sunday after Trinity we pray. "O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant, that thy holy spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are taught the reason for offering up these petitions in the 10th article of free-will. "The condition of man after the fall of

" Adam is fuch, that he cannot turn and pre-" pare himfelf by his own natural strength " and good works to faith and calling upon " God: wherefore we have no power to do " good works pleafant and acceptable to God, " without the grace of God by Christ preventing " us, that we may have a good-will, and work-" ing with us when we have that good-will." We have loft by the fall the power of turning and preparing our hearts to any religious exercife, and we have not even the good-will, much lefs the power to do any one good work, until the grace of God go before and dispose the will, and afterwards work with us, when we have Cc 2 that

that good will; from whence it is evident, that the will and the affections must be renewed by the Holy Ghost, before there can be any good in fallen man; agreeably to what we read (Prov. xvi. 1.) "that the preparations of the heart in "man are from the Lord."

From these authorities of scripture, and of our own church, it must be evident to every unprejudiced person, that the heart is by nature inclined to evil, hard and stony, and unwilling to receive any good impressions, and no power can soften it but an almighty Spirit, whose grace alone is able to renew it after the image of him that created it.

And after the understanding is enlightened, and the will and affections renewed, we still want grace every moment to enable us to go on in the ways of holiness. After we have received justifying grace, we continually stand in need of the fanctifying grace of the holy Spirit. We cannot take one step without his assistance: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. We have no power nor might in ourselves, but all our fufficiency is of God. In our spiritual course his grace is as necessary, as breathing is to the body. There is but one word in fcripture for the air which the body breaths, and for that grace which is the breath of our spiritual life; and if you cannot move, much less run a race, without breath, how then can you run through your christian course without grace?

You

You must breathe the air in at every step, and you must have grace breathed into you every step you take in your way to heaven. And therefore when our blessed Lord breathed upon the apostles, he at the same time explained the meaning of what he did by saying, "receive ye "the Holy Ghost," whose gracious office it is to act upon the soul, as breath does upon the body: and hence it is called inspiration, which signifies breathing in, and since this inspiration is as necessary to our spiritual life, as breath is to our animal life, is it not from hence certain, that we cannot take one step in the ways of holiness, unless the inspiration of the Almighty enable us to proceed?

And these are the sentiments of the word of God. "O Lord, I know, fays Jeremiah (x. " 23.) that the way of man is not in himfelf, it " is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The Pfalmist acknowledges it, for he prays, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my " footsteps slip not. Incline my heart unto thy " testimonies, and make me to go in the path of " thy commandments." And again he fays, "I " will run the way of thy commandments, when " thou shalt enlarge my heart," when thou shalt give it freedom and liberty, that it may walk with pleasure in those paths which are to the natural man grievous. And the New Testament opens and explains these expressions of the old, by affuring us, that believers "walk in the spi-" rit.

" rit, and are led by the spirit," and are strengthened by the spirit in the inner man, "who gives " them grace to ferve God acceptably: for the " fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righte-" oufnefs, and truth, proving what is acceptable " unto the Lord." And to enable us to produce these fruits, the comforter is to be with us for ever. He is to guide and direct our lives, and to govern our conversations. He will never leave us, nor forfake us, but will support us with his grace every moment. And this his continual affiftance our church prays for in these words: "O God, forafmuch as without thee we " are not able to please thee, mercifully grant " that thy holy spirit may in ALL things direct " and rule our hearts." (9th Sunday after Trinity.) And again, "O Lord - grant that by " thy holy inspiration we may think those things " that be good, and by thy merciful guidance " may perform the fame." (5th Sunday after Easter.) From whence it is evident, that the holy Spirit is our guide through the journey of life. The whole work of fanctification is his. He cleanses the heart, purifies it, fills it full of faith and hope and love, and enriches it with all the fweet and heavenly tempers of the bleffed Jesus. He sanctifies every visitation to God's people; if it be prosperous, he keeps them humble; if it be adverse, he arms them with patience, and thus he makes all things work together for their good. God grant you may all find

find these truths verified by your own experience: for truths they are, and you cannot deny them. If you believe the word of God, and if you pay any regard to the doctrines of our church, you must confess, that the holy Spirit is the author and finisher of our happy journey through life. Sinful fallen man has no light to direct him in the way, until the holy Spirit remove the darkness of the understanding, and reveal every faving truth, and then he fees the paths which lead to everlasting joy. This is the first step. But when he sees them, he has no will to walk in them. His heart is fet against them, it is hard and ftony, and inflexibly evil. The holy fpirit alone has power to work upon it, and to melt it down into a foft tender heart, which will freely yield to have the law of God engraven upon it. And after we have taken this step, after we have feen the right road in which our journey lies, and are disposed to walk in it, yet we want power to fucceed fuccefsfully. Sin made us weak and infirm, and inbred corruption keeps us fo, and therefore the fame good Spirit, that worketh all in all, must go along with us every step to strengthen our weakness, and support us every moment to help our infirmities. We are not fufficient for these things of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

And fince the evidence of this doctrine is clear and full, and not to be denied by any perfon, who allows the authority of scripture, I

may here reft the matter at prefent, and enquire what effect your affent to it has produced. Have you defired to experience the truth of it? Or have you found the comfort of it in your fouls? Do you remember when the Holy Spirit opened your eyes, and brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light? Is your will reconciled to the will of God? And are you able to conform your lives and conversations to it? If you are in this happy state, and if before God the fearcher of hearts, you can declare that he has done these wonders for your salvation, O be thankful unto him, and live a life of praise and gratitude. May the Holy Spirit direct every thought, and word, and work, to the honour and glory of Jefus Christ your Saviour and your God. But

If you call yourselves christians, and yet know nothing of those great changes, which the Holy Spirit must work in your hearts before you are christians indeed, O consider in what a dangerous state you live. If God be true, your souls are in darkness, your hearts in sin, and all your faculties under the power of satan, and until you be enlightened and converted, have a new heart, and a new nature, you are children of wrath, and if you die in this state, you are lost and ruined to all eternity. If ever you see the face of God with joy, you must be renewed in the spirit of your mind. You must be made just and holy. All this must be done. You must experience

rience it, and you will know it as certainly as you know any truth, when the Holy Spirit bears testimony with your spirits, that you are the children of God.

But you have been told, that this doctrine is enthusiasm. It is so, in the opinion of the world. and it ever was, and ever will be. It must be enthufiafm to the natural man to talk of the inward working of the Holy Spirit; for he difcerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because he has no spiritual differenment. To a man who never found himfelf in darknefs, never felt the hardnefs of his heart, never mourned over his inability to walk in the ways of holiness, it must appear like vifion and madness to talk of being enlightened, and renewed, and ftrengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit. And indeed this doctrine is become ridiculous. It is become the very mark and badge of religious frenzy. As foon as you mention any work of the Holy Spirit, you are supposed to be a little turned in the head, and if you dare maintain the necessity of his grace, you are quite given over. And this shame and reproach is hard to bear. Many perfons, who in their confciences affent to the doctrine, are terrified from owning it for fear of the world, and thereby lofe all its comforts. I am acquainted with feveral persons in this unhappy state. God grant you may be all free from it: But as it is a common temptation, with which it is probable every christian will be tried, it will therefore be proper to consider it.

This is, I suppose, your state. You affent in your minds to the truth of the doctrine, but dare not own it for fear of being called enthufiasts. What weakness is this? Consider well what you lose by being afraid of a nick-name. Can any thing be more weak and foolish, than to fet out alone upon your journey for eternity, and to reject the only guide who can direct you fafe, because you will be ridiculed for following his directions; and fo for fear of being laughed at, you blunder on in the wrong way, until you fall at last into the pit of destruction? And then how will this reflection add to your mifery, that you had no temptation to reject the Holy Spirit's guidance, but the ridicule of the world. The fcripture affured you, that he was your only guide, and you believed it. The church of England taught you to pray to him, and to feek him for your only guide, and you affented to her doctrines. And yet you gave up the scripture, gave up the doctrines of your own church, for fear of a nick-name; nay more, you gave up your hopes of eternal glory. Good God, what magic is there in a name, that it should charm you out of heaven! How dreadful is reproach, if it should terrify you more than hell! Should not we have thought it unaccountable, if we did not fee it every day, that a hard name, which is but a found and nothing more, should work fo wonderfully

derfully upon the mind. But, men and brethren, use your reason. Will you give up all that is dear and valuable to avoid a nick-name? Will you lose all the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit for fear of being called an enthufiaft? Certainly you cannot act fo weak and wicked a part, and you will not, if you fly to the Holy Spirit for grace, whenever you find reproach like to stagger your faith. He will enable you to overcome the temptation, if you feek his strength. He can fo arm you with might in the inner man, that the ridicule of the world will make no impression upon you; nay he can make it sweet, he will enable you even to bear it and love it. God grant you may now feek his ftrength. O that he may now be prefent among you with his almighty grace, and dispose every one of you to take him for your guide through the journey of life, and then he will fill your hearts with that perfect love of God, which will cast out the fear of men.

But if you are not affected with these motives, if you still see no necessity for being guided by the blessed Spirit, would to God I could discover the secret springs of your hearts, and turn them to that adorable person, whose grace alone can make you happy. O that I could convince you so far, as toput you this moment upon seeking the gracious guidance of the eternal Spirit. But this is his own work. We must plead and intreat, and importune you to seek his assistance,

but the fuccess must come from him. The word itself is but a dead letter, unless he animate it; and therefore the preaching of it can have no power, unless he accompany it. We may plant and water, but he must give the increase. O that it may be abundant this day to the glory of Jesus Christ. And all of you who desire it, will join your hearts with mine in requesting it of him.

O almighty God, who as at this time didft teach the hearts of thy faithful people by the fending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, fend, we befeech thee, the fame Spirit to enlighten our understandings, that we may have a right judgment in all things, and may his grace operate with power upon our hearts, foftening their hard stony nature, and making them willing to obey the law of God; and then grant, that he may finish this great work, by enabling us to proceed in the ways of holiness, until we happily end the journey of life. O may the eternal Spirit come down upon this whole congregation, and enlighten, and renew, and strengthen every one of us in the inner man, that we may now and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Spirit, three persons of equal honour and glery, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen, and Amen. 12 JY 62

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

